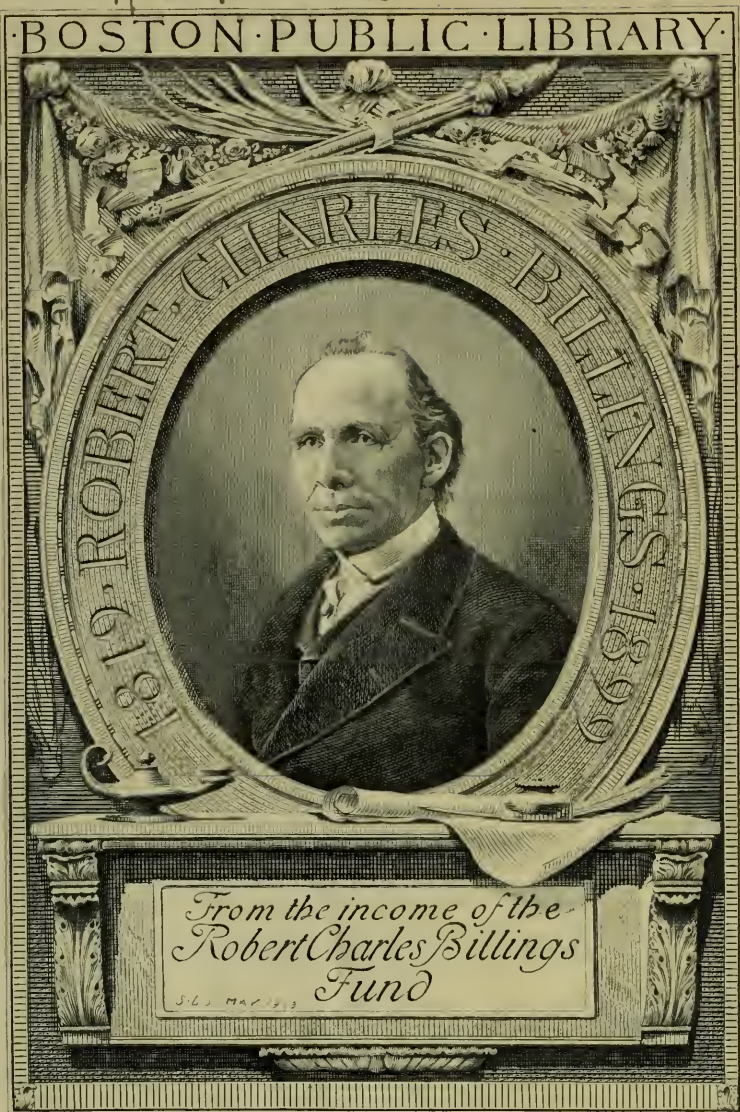


LANOE · FALCONER

EVELYN · MARCH · PHILLIPPS

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LANOE FALCONER

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FRESCOES IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

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THE VENETIAN SCHOOL OF PAINTING



MARIE HAWKER
("Lanoe Falconer")

LANOE FALCONER

(AUTHOR OF "MADEMOISELLE IXE")

BY

EVELYN MARCH-PHILLIPPS

London

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X.

TO
JULIA LANOE HAWKER
THIS RECORD
OF
HER SISTER
IS INSCRIBED

First Published in 1915

PREFACE

IN completing this memoir, my thanks are due first to Mrs. Harry Hawker who, besides placing all her sister's hitherto unopened papers at my disposal, has constantly helped me by supplying information and recollections which no one else could have furnished. I am also indebted to Mrs. Lee-White, Mrs. Walker, Lady Portsmouth, and Lady Rosamond Christie for the same kind of help. I owe thanks to Lady Portsmouth, Mrs. Birch, and Mr. Gerald Vernon Wallop for help with illustrations, to Mr. Henry Houndle for looking over the memoir on behalf of Miss Hawker's family, to all those who have sanctioned the inclusion of letters, and, not least, to Mr. Bertram Christian of Messrs. Nisbet and Co. for reading proofs and giving advice on various points. A small portion of the material has already appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine*, for which I desire to make due acknowledgment.

EVELYN MARCH-PHILLIPS.

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LANOE FALCONER

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

THE announcement of Lanoe Falconer's death came with something of a shock to those who had looked upon her little books as among the best of the literary work of the 'nineties, and who had continued dimly to hope that they might be followed by others, as solid in workmanship, as distinguished in style, and as delightfully entertaining.

Was the rest to be silence? Were we never to know anything further of a mind whose promise seemed even richer than its performance?

Among those who waited expectantly for some further knowledge was the writer of this memoir, and at length inquiries were made as to whether any could be hoped for. The answer came when Lanoe Falconer's sister placed in her hands a weighty packet of notebooks and diaries which had never been disturbed since

their author tied them up a few weeks before her death. They are written in various forms : in thick manuscript books, in children's copy-books, on little quires of note-paper stitched together, in penny account books. With them, folded in a faded blue silk bag which might have represented the last relics of the celebrated "blue silk skirt," hereinafter mentioned, were such letters as she had from time to time received from notable persons. All were carefully arranged and dated and range over many years.

The task of opening and examining these was a pathetic and a responsible one, and it soon became evident that they contained much that one would not willingly suffer to perish. To the copious selections which have been made have been added the loving and vivid recollections of relatives and friends. By degrees a personality has been built up, speaking as much as possible in its own words ; speaking with a faith, a courage, a charm which it is confidently believed will appeal to all those who can recognise a rare nature, victorious over adverse circumstances, and filled with love for its fellow-creatures.

The history of Lanoe Falconer's family has

been dwelt upon rather circumstantially, because on both sides heredity seems to have played a sufficiently remarkable part, and we are able to trace in rather a striking fashion the sources from which the subject of our memoir drew her gifts both of intellect and of character.

The real name of the author of *Mademoiselle Ixe* was Mary Elizabeth Hawker. She came of a family of which the menfolk had been soldiers since a regular army first arose in England, in the reign of Elizabeth. In the days of Queen Anne, a Peter Hawker became Governor of Portsmouth, and doing well for himself, bought the estate of Longparish, near Whitchurch, in the county of Hampshire. His descendants have named him Peter the First, and the estate is now in the possession of a seventh Peter Hawker. Marie Hawker's grandfather was the well-known Colonel Peter Hawker who fought in the Peninsular War, and whose *Instructions to Young Sportsmen* has been through many editions. It is still read by those who hunt and shoot for the wisdom it contains, and by others for its style and literary quality. Colonel Hawker

is able to endow his pages with that charm which, in spite of his headstrong and selfish nature, seems to have belonged to a vigorous, audacious personality. Longparish House, where he lived for many years, is a long white house, restored and partly rebuilt in the eighteenth century, with good-sized rooms, cheerful and liveable, a graceful garden, pavilion, and lawns sloping down to the river Test. The oak panelling which once lined the walls within has been discarded, after the fashion of a Victorian age, in favour of French papers, but is still retained in one small room, into the panels of which have been set a number of family portraits. Here are Governor Hawker in his full-bottomed wig, the beautiful Arethusa Ryves, an heiress who married a later Peter, and others in powder and silk coats, or uniforms with high stocks. Colonel Hawker's own portrait in the uniform of a colonel of Yeomanry still hangs in the entrance-hall. His town-house was in Dorset Square, where his daughters, Mary and Sophy, early in the nineteenth century, received their education, and took walks in Regent's Park, their footman, Charles Heath, carrying their books and workbags and Les Graces.

Their only brother Lanoe, named after a favourite brother officer of Colonel Hawker's, born in 1809, was a very different sort of being from his father. Of a gentle and affectionate nature, neglected in his boyhood, he grew up rather subdued and quiet. His health was not very strong, and he was kept on a meagre allowance by his father, who was a wild, extravagant man, and had married a second time, not over happily. Lanoe Hawker was not clever, but is said to have been extraordinarily lovable, and his loyalty to his brilliant father prevented his making any decided assertion of his own claims. He joined the 74th Highlanders, and in 1837, when stationed at Stirling, he met Elizabeth Fraser, with whom an engagement was formed which was to last for ten years.

Miss Fraser, at this time a girl of eighteen, was of a character and temperament the very opposite of her lover. She came of a spirited Highland family, of which she has left us a racy account. Her grandfather Fraser, a doctor or lawyer, married Miss Elizabeth Forrester of Frew, greatly to the displeasure of her family. On her death, at the birth of her second child, he took to wife a beautiful,

worthless woman of gipsy blood, who ill-used the little son. About 1802 the judges held their Assize in Stirling, and dined at the Saracen's Head. Mrs. Mason, the landlady, busy superintending the dinner, looked out and cried to a group of boys waiting to see the judge's procession, "Whilk o' you bairns can rin to the King's Park Farm and fetch me some cream? If you're back before dinner I'll gie ye a saxpence." Soon after she saw the little volunteer, aged seven, standing near the table and staring at all the good things. Giving the sixpence she discovered that he was the child of David Fraser, and would not go home because his stepmother had told him not to come till he had some money to bring, and he did not choose to bring her money. He looked forward soon to be able to support himself (at seven!), because the groom at this hotel had said he would "gie him wark" next week, polishing stirrups, when the Yeomanry came, and promised him he should sleep in the hayloft. Mrs. Mason, remembering his mother, the beautiful, well-born Elizabeth Forrester, was much touched, and said he should not sleep in the hay, but in a little room.

Next day Mrs. Mason went to see Laird

Fraser, and entreated him "to have some mercy on his son." Fraser confessed that he was under the dominion of his wife, whom he hated when absent, but loved when present, declaring at last that he was "in the thrall of the Devil, and could not get free."

Young Fraser was brought up and educated by the Masons. His mother's money had been secured to him, and he chose to be a printer. He went to London to make his fortune, but not succeeding, he prepared to start homewards. On his last night in London he went to the theatre, having in his pocket just enough money for his journey. Waking the next morning in the room he shared with a gentleman who had gone to bed dead drunk, he found that his pocket had been picked. "Good God! what shall I do?" he cried aloud. A voice from the other bed answered, "Do? Get me a glass of brandy as fast as you can."

This being accomplished, the stranger said, "And now, my young friend, what is the matter with you?" He turned out to be the master of a ship going north, and took him to within easy reach of his own home.

At the age of twenty-one Fraser married Jean, daughter of Robert Dick, a manu-

facturer, and bought a paper. Shortly after, discovering that it was on what he considered the wrong (*i.e.* the Tory) side in politics, he bought another in Glasgow, and sent off his machinery to the Glasgow office. The carrier arriving at the office found the sheriff's officers in possession, come to take up the editor of the paper for publishing the speech of a Whig member in the House of Commons. For publishing this speech several editors had to fly the country, but the carrier, having the sense to say nothing, and to return with the machinery, Fraser was not implicated. But he had sold his Stirling paper, and had nothing to look to, so he returned to London, and for a time edited *The Literary Review*. His wife, however, became ill and homesick, whereupon he went back to Scotland, and started another paper at Paisley. This came to grief during the bad times of 1825, so that he went back to Stirling, where his mother-in-law lived, and kept a day-school, apparently with some success. A story is told of his attending the trial of a half-witted lad of twenty, known as Scatters, who was found guilty of the murder of an old woman in her cottage, and condemned to be hanged. As

her money had been taken, and none had been found upon him, it was supposed he had been made a tool of. Fraser visited him in prison, and the lad clinging to him to the last, besought him to go with him to the scaffold. On the way to execution it was the custom to stop the procession at the court-house for prayer. The prisoner was asked to choose the psalm, and chose "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, saith the Lord." The whole scene had such an effect on Fraser's nerves that he is said never to have recovered from it.

Elizabeth Fraser has also left some details of the Dick genealogy, which are not a little significant. The first ancestor who can be traced was left a widow with two young sons. One of these became a manufacturer, and was married the same day as George III to Lizzie Reid, a *maîtresse femme*. Their eldest son, born on the same day as George IV, ought to have been called George, after his own grandfather, but a donation having been offered to all children born on that day and christened George, Mrs. Lizzie, for fear she should be supposed to have accepted this, called her child John, a great breach of family etiquette in those days. She had four sons and one

daughter. The sons she managed entirely, but the daughter having displeased her one day, she said to her husband, "John Dick, correct your daughter. I'll manage my sons myself."

Her brothers were very clever men, and all free-thinkers. Her father was found dead in a summer-house in the garden at the age of a hundred and four. His Bible was lying at some distance, and the legend obtained that he had fallen asleep, that the Devil had carried off the Bible, and the fairies had pinched him to death.

John Dick, Lizzie Reid's eldest son, was nicknamed Talleyrand, because he was so "pawkie." His brother Robert's daughter married John Fraser, Marie Hawker's grandfather.

Bothwell Ha', Stirling, where Elizabeth Fraser was living at the time of her marriage, had been a great house, but was then let in flats. Her mother rented two floors—a long passage with dining-room and drawing-room, and kitchens and bedrooms above. She had one servant, Marget Drummond, who was glad when the servant she succeeded left the neighbourhood, because she could not boast in her presence of the French polished furniture—which did not exist.



COLONEL PETER HAWKER
(From a portrait at Longparish House)

At length in 1847, after waiting for ten years, Lanoe Hawker and Elizabeth Fraser were married. She was twenty-eight years old—a vigorous young woman, not tall, but with a full figure and an erect and graceful carriage. Her complexion was beautiful, white and carnation. She was clever and well-read; one of those creatures who give a zest to life, full of spirit and *joie de vivre*.

For the first six years of their married life Mr. and Mrs. Lanoe Hawker lived at Inverary, a little shooting lodge in Aberdeenshire. Here in 1848 their eldest child, Mary Elizabeth, the subject of this memoir, was born. She was followed by a son, who died in infancy, and in 1852 by another son, Peter James Duff.

In 1854 Colonel Peter Hawker died, and the family travelled down to Hampshire to take possession of Longparish House.

Marie at this time was a sensitive, clever little child, of a quick, impatient temper. Her mother told with amusement how, when she was but eighteen months old, another tiny child seized her toys, and how Marie, with much promptitude and decision, administered a smart slap to the invader. She was easily alarmed by ugly sights. She never

forgot the horror inspired, while she was still a baby, by the bandaged foot of one of the villagers, or by a hideous indiarubber face brought her as a toy.

On the journey down to England the six-year-old child spent most of her time reading. No attempt had been made to teach her, but she had picked up reading with a little help. She was an intelligent little girl, and her father was devoted to and proud of her. Even as a child she was severe upon herself for a bit of mischief into which she had been betrayed, when the sweets were waiting outside the dining-room door, and she, pleased with the transparent look of a jelly, dug a row of holes in it with her finger. "It was such *stupid* mischief," she said.

The life at Longparish was of short duration. Already, before leaving Scotland, Lanoe Hawker had shown signs of consumption, and two years later was sent to Madeira. His wife accompanied him, leaving the children, to whom a second daughter had been added, in charge of her faithful Scotch nurse MacLean, at Longparish House. Lanoe died in April 1857. His broken-hearted widow came home alone, and long after, tells her daughter, of all

that she, a child of nine years old, became to her as a companion and consoler.

A year after her husband's death Mrs. Hawker settled in London, in Bentinck Street, where she spent her winters, going for the summer to Scotland, to a house she had built near Bridge of Allan, while Longparish House was let for some years. An older cousin describes them at this time as "three delightful children"—Marie, very tall for her ten years, with a long slender throat, hair light brown with a glint of gold, parted and hanging straight down, "like a picture of the Madonna." She had a beautifully shaped head, with, as the doctor told her mother, all the best bumps of phrenology.

The next five years were very happy ones. Marie and her mother were inseparable. Mrs. Hawker read with her, explained things, and talked to her on every sort of subject, much as she might have done to an older person. Her education was carried on at one small school or another, sometimes in London, sometimes under a Presbyterian minister, with a short interval at Queen's College. For nearly a year she worked with the Miss Woodmans, clever, strict teachers, with whom she did well.

Many years after Marie called on her old mistress. "Well," said Miss Woodman, "so Julie and Peter are married, and what do you do?" Marie explained that she was the writer of *Mademoiselle Ixe*. "You write like that!" exclaimed the old lady, much moved and with tears coming into her eyes. "I knew it years ago; I told them you would!"

With other young cousins who lived near them in London, the little Hawkers carried on all sorts of games, and especially delighted in acting charades. Marie is described as the life of the party, settling the word, casting the parts, and acting admirably herself. Full of fun, a charming companion, very good-tempered. "I never saw her anything but patient and good-tempered," says her cousin. "She took everything in good part."

She was about thirteen when she upset the gravity of a whole pewful of cousins at a missionary meeting by an impersonation (carried out with a black kid glove draped with a handkerchief) of what even the youngest of the party recognised at a glance as one of the converted heathen. His gratification at any words of praise, his offended air at the description of the previous state of his tribe,

his intense interest in the progress of the collection, and his extreme displeasure at the meagre contribution of a grown-up but very young and deeply ashamed cousin, who was in charge of the party, needed no explanation in words.

When the cousins spent holidays and half-holidays together, a favourite game was "engaging servants." Marie coming for a cook's place would give wonderful descriptions of the puddings she could make, and the number of eggs required. As a nurse she expounded startling ways of treating the children, and "putting down" the nursemaid, and kept her audience in shrieks of laughter, while she herself was perfectly grave. The old Highland nurse derived a morbid pleasure from playing on the feelings of the two younger children by minutely describing her grave, to which Peter was to lead his bride, richly attired in pink silk and holding a white-fringed parasol, and allude in moving terms to his "dear old nurse." Marie, who had great common sense and a dislike to sentimentality, when she found the children bathed in tears, felt that the nonsense ought to be stopped, and put an end to it by adding such comic details that even

Peter had to laugh, and nurse's reproach that Marie was "dancing on her grave" was answered by a *pas seul* on the hearthrug.

When Nurse MacLean married, Mrs. Hawker built a cottage for her at Bridge of Allan as a wedding present. All the young people wrote poems on the occasion, Marie's taking the first prize; and, about this time, when she was thirteen, she wrote a poem called "Cloud Mountains," which appeared in *Chambers's Journal*. She began to write versified fairy plays to be acted at Christmas, and throughout the year the children acted incessantly; made-up plays, scenes out of plays and operas seen by the elder ones, bits from Shakespeare or from the *Colleen Bawn*.

She formed an intimacy with a brother and sister, Charlie and Janie Gordon. Janie Gordon was two years her elder, intelligent, a great reader of good literature, and when circumstances separated them they wrote one another long letters full of discussions. The brother was an odd, unbalanced boy, witty, ill-tempered, and sarcastic. He and Marie would discuss, quarrel, and argue by the hour, but though their love of talk and their appreciation of one another's wit drew them together, and she had

no other companion of the same calibre, they were not very sympathetic *au fond*. Marie had a vein of strong and sturdy common sense, a power of seeing the ridiculous side of the emotional, which steadied all her views, but which repelled the boy, who in his turn incurred her half-contemptuous amusement by his habit of throwing himself into violent extremes of opinion. He afterwards joined the Church of Rome and became a member of a very austere religious order, and has been entirely lost sight of.

Soon after the conclusion of her fourteenth year Marie Hawker's whole life was changed, by the advent of the man who one can scarcely forbear from describing as her evil genius. Mrs. Hawker met Mr. Herbert Fennell in London. He visited her in Bentinck Street, did his utmost to make himself acceptable to her children, followed them to Scotland, and made a proposal of marriage. Mrs. Hawker at first refused to listen to him. Her friends were very much against the idea, and perhaps made too strenuous an opposition. Elizabeth Hawker had one of those natures always prone to champion the abused ; she thought he had not been done justice to. He persuaded her of

the advantage it would be to her children to have an adviser and protector. He was a handsome man, tall and dark, with a long, pointed black moustache and hard black eyes, but though he was sincerely in love it cannot be doubted that it was an unsuitable match. Mr. Fennell, the son of a schoolmaster, as he appeared to the eyes of her friends, was below her in the social scale, without fortune, something of an adventurer. He is described as a man of no mentality; and the handsome, genial woman with her comfortable income was looked on as the prey of specious good looks and a flattering tongue. Before accepting him, however, Mrs. Hawker took her eldest girl into her confidence, telling her that though she thought the marriage would be for her own happiness, she would not proceed with it if Marie opposed it. The latter declared at once that she wished her mother to do whatever would make her happiest, and the matter was settled. Unluckily, Mrs. Hawker, delighted with what she thought her child's generous and unselfish behaviour, made the mistake of confiding it to her new husband. Mr. Fennell, who was an extremely vain man, was very much offended at the idea of a child

having been in any way the arbiter of his destiny, and his resentment laid the foundation of a dislike to his step-daughter which was never overcome.

In the spring of 1863 the couple were married, and went off for a honeymoon of some months, leaving their children at Longparish House, which happened just then to be unlet, in the companionship of a young cousin, to whom they were much attached. (The same, indeed, who had been so shocked by the vagaries of the converted heathen, and who has supplied many of the details of their childhood.) The old servant, Charles Heath, who had been footman to their aunts, now lived in a pretty cottage at the entrance gates. In front of it are three trees planted by the three children in their father's lifetime, and the garden at the back was full of gooseberry trees from which they ate as many as they liked, though the three best bushes were to be kept for the special delectation of the young squire.

Constant excursions were made in a quaint, old-fashioned village cart, drawn by a strong brown pony which never got tired. Heath was always in charge, and the first time they drove into Winchester, twelve miles away, he pointed

out the barracks "where the Major first put on his regimentals," with his eyes full of tears, and we may divine with what indignation in his heart at the thought of the usurper.

Marie and her cousin shared the same room, and when they woke early Marie would tell delightful stories, which she invented as she went on. "Cousin Ellen" would recite passages from Shakespeare and Gray's "Elegy," and Marie, repeating them after her, soon learnt all by heart. She taught herself French at this time, and spent a great deal of time sketching the picturesque cottages.

Towards the end of the summer the married couple joined them. One of the first things Mr. Fennell had done was to advise his wife to give up the Scotch home and to go abroad for some time, so that soon after the whole party started for France. Some years were spent in Normandy and Brittany, at small, inexpensive towns with homely inns off the beaten track. The English children indulged in long walks over hill and dale in the summers and autumns. Marie speaks afterwards of the delightful rambles through that fruitful Norman land, blooming with gardens and orchards and woodland, and watered by bright streams

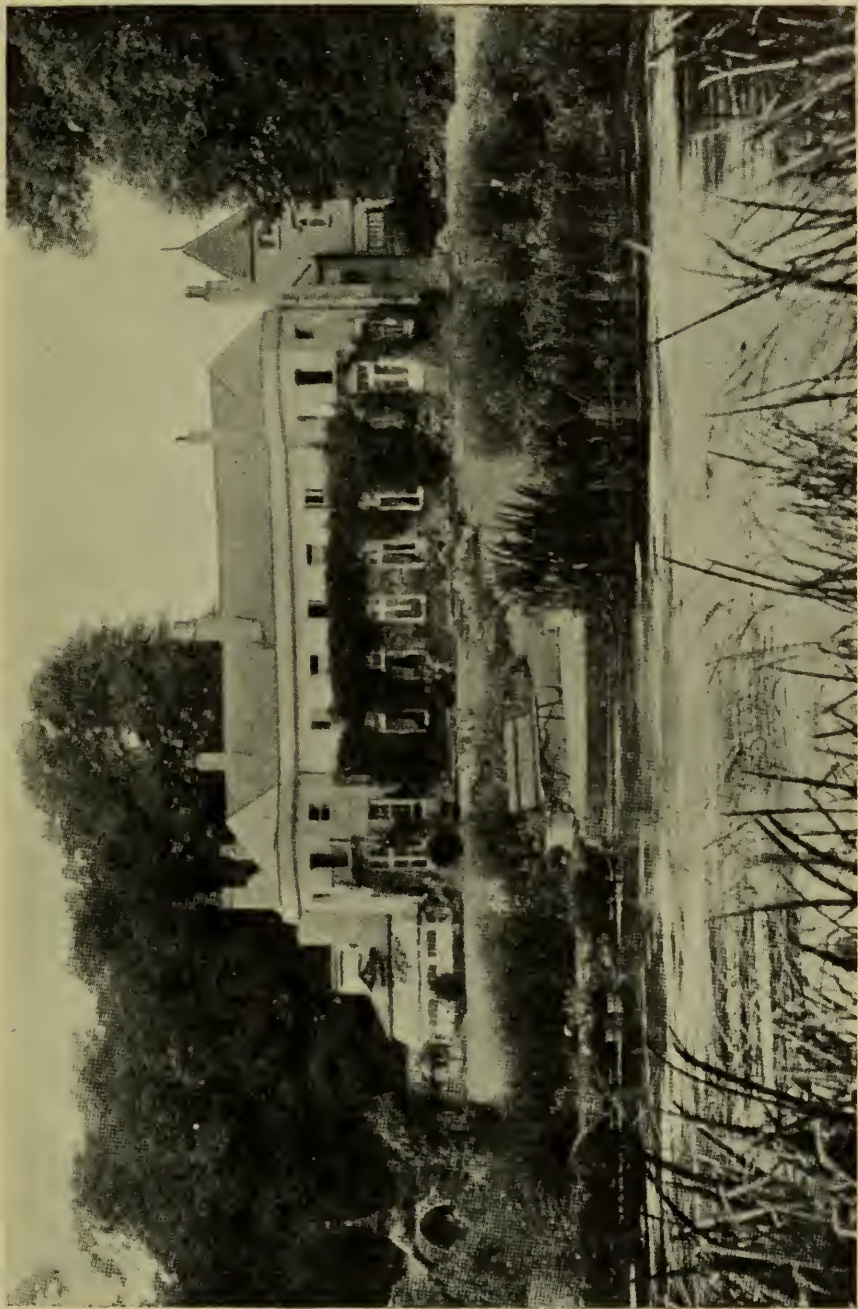
gliding smoothly on, or foaming impetuously past the scattered mills and homesteads. "The air grew cooler as we wandered on; the glowing pink above us faded into grey; sometimes the perfumed darkness gathered, before we returned, tired and hungry, to the 'Cheval Blanc,' too tired to be captious about the unadorned ugliness of our dining-room, ill-lighted by two flickering candles, hungry enough to sup with relish on artichokes, eggs, freshly made *galettes*, and new milk served in an earthenware *terraine* about the size of an ordinary English footbath."

The Duchess, owner of the Park, kindly allowed the English visitors to wander in it at will with the French governess, whose quondam pupil the Duke's granddaughter had been, and occasionally they lunched at the château, a huge, barrack-like building in which the whole population of the little town might easily have been lodged. The old Duchess had had a strange history. Her parents were guillotined during the French Revolution, and she herself, an infant of three or four, stood behind them on the scaffold, awaiting the same fate, when a *bourreau*, moved by a sudden impulse of pity, snatched her up and tossed

her into the heaving crowd below. She was picked up by one of her own class who had escaped the popular fury, and who, when he opened the locket that hung round the child's neck, recognised the portrait of his sister, and perceived that it was his own niece whom fate had thus strangely thrust into his arms.

Marie's letters home at this time are described as most graphic and entertaining. She taught herself German while in France with a French-German grammar, and so thoroughly that when the family arrived in Prussia she was very quickly able to talk the language. A few years later they went to live at Aix-la-Chapelle, where they had a country villa, with a sheet of water and a boat. The water had a curious red tinge, and the pond was full of enormous frogs which made a deafening noise. Marie made up wonderful fairy tales about them. Sometimes the frogs turned at night into men who robbed and murdered travellers, whose bodies, thrown into the water, accounted for its dreadful colour; sometimes they were human beings who had been bewitched.

Whilst at Aix, an uncle, another Colonel Hawker, and Peter, who had joined the Royal



LONGPARISH HOUSE

Navy and had got his leave, were added to the party, which was further augmented by a brother of Mr. Fennell with his wife and daughter, and a large and merry party amused themselves in all sorts of ways, shot at marks, went for picnics, or walked on stilts. Peter arrived in his naval cadet's uniform, with a dirk at his side, his pride in which was shared by his sisters. One day he was surrounded by a crowd of some twenty little *gamins*, in whom he had apparently failed to inspire respect, shouting, "Rosbif-boule-dogue!" Peter, indignant at the insult to the Queen's uniform, at length drew his dirk and made for them, scattering them in all directions. The children returned home much excited, but their elders were less gratified. His mother made the boy promise never to unsheath his weapon again, under any circumstances whatsoever, telling him it might cause dreadful trouble and even bring on a war between the two countries. The whole party went to stay at a tiny village in the hills, only reached by *diligence*, where they had to drink beer for breakfast, the water being undrinkable, and to eat black bread, and where they were a source of boundless interest to the villagers.

All this time Marie received very little education, or only such as a series of governesses, half-educated themselves, could give. But she read French and German incessantly, and studied Italian with a German-Italian grammar. When she was nineteen the party went to Nantes, and here she met a very accomplished musician and composer, an old M. Gervais, who admired her playing very much, encouraged and helped her, and persuaded her mother to give her some really good lessons. From this time she worked seriously at music, and M. Gervais dedicated some of his compositions to "Miss Hawker of Longparish." The summer of 1867 was spent within easy reach of Paris, where the exhibitions and good music were the source of much enjoyment. In 1868 they returned to England, where Longparish House had again been let for a term of years.

CHAPTER II

LIFE AT HURSTBOURNE PRIORS

THE village of Hurstbourne Priors in which Mr. and Mrs. Fennell settled on their return from abroad lies between Whitchurch and Andover, two miles from the first and four from the last. The great park of Hurstbourne, the seat of the Earls of Portsmouth, occupies many miles of space in the valley, and the village nestles in true English fashion on its confines. In *Hampshire Vignettes* Marie writes of its charm, of its crystalline air and untarnished green, of the silence broken only by soft pastoral noises :

“ Few places ever breathed such ineffable repose as this shallow, low-brimmed valley, fed by streams ‘ glassy-cool and translucent.’ These waters and the goodly trees it nourished are all it had to boast of. The connoisseur of scenery might bewail the absence of bold outline and wide outlook, but perhaps for that very reason did the victim of town-fever love

it and steep himself with rapture in its sleepy calm. 'Peace' was the perpetual lullaby of this lowly land, which even the winter winds visited not too roughly, and summer half buried in luxuriant bloom."

The valley is lovely at all times of the year. The deep-bosomed woods clothe the low, undulating hills on either hand, the brilliant greens of beech and lime darken into the rich gloom of summer, flame into orange and crimson in the dying fall, and even in winter are blended by the damp into soft purples and ethereal greys. After rain, high skies and splendid clouds stand out behind the tall clumps of elm trees, grey aspens and poplars mark the course of the stream, "flowing so softly, that scarcely it seems to be flowing," spreading out in glassy sheets in which all the surroundings are reflected, and suddenly, under a mass of dark foliage, tumbling down in a miniature cataract flashing through the darkness, only to resume its placid course a little farther down, through the wide meadows in which the water-courses "shine like spears." Behind the woods rise the first folds of the downs, which stretch away on all sides, and from which the fine air floods

the valley and counteracts the velvet softness of the misty atmosphere. The little church was restored and the tower rebuilt just after Marie came back. It is of the picturesque order of the 'seventies, the old windows and porch having been made use of. The great house upon the hill, a mile away, looks down a glade. For many years it stood, a great white building, in the Italian style, but it was burnt down in 1883, and a mansion of red brick and timber has been erected in its stead. On the hillside across the valley is a stretch of common bounded by the Cocklelorum woods, so named by the peasants to commemorate the "High Cocklelorum" pretensions of a former Lord Portsmouth in engrossing the common lands in his park.

On the first slopes of the valley are the thatched cottages of the villagers, every garden gay with flowers, and here too are one or two small "gentlemen's houses." That which the Fennells took, and which they distinguished by the name of "The Garden," was one of those small residences in which there always seems plenty of room. It has a large, comfortable drawing-room, with two windows, and a glass door opening on the garden front, a

dining-room, in which they, on one occasion at least, dined sixteen, a "den" for Mr. Fennell, seven or eight bedrooms, and servants' rooms.

"The little house itself," writes Marie in her diary, "stood on a broad gravel terrace. From this the lawn declined at first steeply, then more gradually, to the ivy-covered wall that separates us from the dusty village road. The graceful lines of the sloping sward were traced on either side by flower borders, and were prolonged and finished in the arabesque curves of the slope. To the right such trees as firs and ashes lifted a wing of protecting leafage between us and the outer world.

"Care and taste slowly fashioned and finished this tiny garden into a work of art. In summer it sparkled as if sown with jewels, so vivid against the rich green of sward and bough shone out the flaming geraniums, the garlands of many-coloured roses, the clematis pale or purple.

"Beyond, an even expanse of meadow; besprinkled with groups of gigantic elms and limes; four limes, their trunks growing close together, their branches intertwining to make one entire and perfect tree, compact, symmetrical."

In a good-sized vegetable garden adjoining, Mr. Fennell put up an imposing range of hot-houses, and devoted himself with great success to the culture of peaches, grapes, and nectarines.

Peter Hawker made Hurstbourne Priors his headquarters whenever he was not at sea, and after he came of age, left the Navy and devoted himself, as his own agent, to farming and to looking after his estate. Longparish House, which was distant about a mile, had been let to Mr. and Mrs. Harris, young people with small children. Besides these neighbours, with whom Sunday afternoon was often spent, there were the Birches at Drayton Park, whose grown-up sons, full of fun and spirits, were soon hand and glove with the young Hawkers, Mr. and Mrs. Iremonger, he a son of the Iremongers of Whewell Priory, a family with which the Hawkers had been connected for many generations. A few quaint, old-fashioned neighbours lingered round Longparish, all of whom appreciated Marie. Most important of all in its bearing on her daily life was the neighbourhood of Hurstbourne Park. No one who recalls the wide sympathies, the enthusiastic outlook upon life which distinguished Eveline, Lady

Portsmouth, will say that her friendship was a superficial factor in a young girl's education. We say friendship advisedly, for Lady Portsmouth had a special gift and attraction for young people. In a large country house party she would abandon the dowagers and come to sit among the girls, talking to them on equal terms, drawing them out, inquiring into their thoughts and ambitions, discussing, inspiring. Something of her boundless sympathy, her high courage and kindness, lives for us in *Cecilia de Noël*. With Lady Portsmouth and her daughters Marie became on intimate terms, but in the second, Lady Camilla Wallop (afterwards Lady Camilla Gurdon), she found her dearest and most congenial friend, and as time went on the two girls were drawn into an ever closer companionship.

Quietly as Marie lived, she saw English society at its best, and the shades of difference with which she draws the country lady, the vicar's wife, or the fashionable butterfly, are the fruits of experience imbibed at first-hand.

Those who visited "The Garden," thirty-five or forty years ago, have a vivid recollection of a delightful party, of a hostess the very essence of kindness and warmth, of the wel-

come given and the entertainment afforded by the party of high-spirited young people, generally reinforced by friends or cousins staying in the house, of talk brilliant and original beyond the average. Tea was a most popular rendezvous, whether spread in the warm, firelit drawing-room in winter, or in summer on the wide, shady terrace which ran along the front of the house.

Though money was never plentiful, the comfortable household was free from pecuniary worries, and had not to think too closely of ways and means. There were always one or two horses belonging to themselves or to their brother for riding and driving. Marie rode well and gracefully, and it was her favourite amusement in these years. She was also very fond of walking, and, with her sister, took long walks in the lanes and on the downs, the two holding animated arguments, both talking eagerly, differing on every possible subject. Though so fond of discussion, Marie had the art of seeking the truth without losing her temper or "talking to win." The lifelong bond of affection which united the sisters dates from the confirmation of the younger on the return from abroad, when her preparation,

ostensibly carried on by the curate, was really Marie's task. For two years Marie became her sister's teacher. She neither liked teaching nor taught well, but it was easy to lure her from long screeds of names and dates to talk over literary matters. Her sister, by her own account "a well-dispositioned but spoilt child," soon acquired great admiration for Marie's views, and "for herself, deep love and respect." It says much for the connection between the young girl in her early twenties and the child of thirteen or fourteen that the latter, looking back to those days, cannot remember a cross or impatient word on either side.

On one occasion Miss Hawker asked her little sister, with that simplicity with which she took for granted that no one would be unwilling to try to realise and acknowledge their faults and failings, whether she thought she really was unusually stupid for her age. The little girl, who knew that she appeared stupid, but had never looked at her lesson, and was trying to get on by dodging and prompting Marie to ask leading questions, was compelled to answer an honest question with equal honesty. Though such a shrewd ob-

server, the elder often puzzled and amused her more sceptical younger sister by taking people at their own valuation. Some such dialogue as this would take place :

M. That Mrs. Brown who was staying at — has more strength of character than one would suppose ; nothing alarms her. She does not know what fear is.

J. I don't believe it.

M. Oh, but she told me so herself.

J. (*silently*) ! ! ! !

Those who knew Marie Hawker at this time recollect her as a unique and charming personality, a creature running over with fun and spirits. Her figure, which afterwards stooped from ill-health, was upright and graceful. Her hair was soft and of a rich shade of auburn, the true colour, her skin white ; her eyes were great short-sighted, grey eyes, full of gleams of light. A very striking trait was her wonderful smile ; beginning in her eyes, it lit up and irradiated her whole face, and those who delighted in her humour waited for the quaint or entertaining or irresistibly droll remark which was sure to follow. Beautiful teeth, strong, white, and regular, were her one small vanity, and the consciousness of

their perfection seemed to give confidence to her laugh. Her hands, too, were beautiful, and she used them eloquently when at her ease, with little gestures caught from having lived for so many years among foreigners. Her speaking face seemed to express her thoughts before her soft, sympathetic voice uttered them. She was the best of company, telling a story admirably and writing delightful letters, and her range of interests was very wide. "A great pleasure of hers," says one of her friends, "was to pass into speculations, social and religious; we often read the same book in order to discuss it." With all her keen sense of the ridiculous, her loving sympathy and power of imagination gave her a horror of paining others by sarcasm, and she dreaded anything that verged on the bumptious or dictatorial. She would talk about music, ideas, other people's work, but it was very difficult to make her talk about her own. "Can a person be very reserved and yet very transparent?" asks the one who knew her best. "Then that was Marie." Offers of marriage were not lacking, and we are assured that two of her suitors were loth to take "No" for an answer and asked her over and over

again ; but there is no trace of the love element in her life, or, if there was anything of the kind, those who knew her best agree that it was slight and fugitive, a mere passing attraction. " I think," she once said to her sister, " that if I had cared at all I should have cared very much " ; but she was too absolutely genuine to feign that passion which no circumstances had evoked—anything like sentimentality was foreign to her nature.

There survives a family publication, the " Argus," a Christmas number of tales and poems, illustrated with enterprise if not always with striking success by the authors. It was circulated for some years among the Hawkers, Houndles, and other cousins. Those contributors who can look back to the time that produced it must smile themselves at what was thought an entertaining pastime in mid-Victorian days. It is a question whether any circle of friends would find time nowadays to write, much less to read, these bulky manuscript volumes ; but in the early 'seventies they wrote and read, criticised and voted upon them with enthusiasm, and between the lines may be read the happy, kindly intercourse, the fun and laughter of a bright and

talented party of young people, pleased with what would hardly suffice to please to-day. The highest number of votes is gained by Marie in 1873, for a story called "The Ghost upon the Terrace," in which the ghost is no departed spirit, but the shade of a living woman, whose supreme hour has once been lived there and whose apparition ceases with her death. The writing already stands out fresh and vivid, and is marked by a clear-cut finish which sets it apart from the ordinary amateur standard.

Every year she contributed the dedicatory ode. As an example of how well she was able to vary the treatment of her theme or to write lively and easy verse, three stanzas are given from the Christmas number for 1873, and the ode for the following year is printed in its entirety.

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A truce to labour and to pain,
To sweat of brow and toil of brain,
A truce to every weary sigh,
To troubled past and by and by.
Lay down the weary cares of men
And take our childhood up again.
Again we hail with eager grace
The pudding's brown, familiar face,

Again with nimble fingers tear
 The plums from blue snapdragon's glare.
 And last not least, now draw we near
 In magic circle formed to hear,
 While neither faith nor fancy fail,
 The Christmas ghost and fairy tale.

For this bright home of Christmas tide
 The "Argus" pages best provide,
 Within its Christmas number lie
 Delight alike for mind and eye.
 And such the varied styles displayed,
 And such the wise selection made,
 No taste so bad, no taste so good,
 But here will find its welcome food.
 We ladies first, who most approve
 The tale of sad or happy love,
 The "Argus" offers to your view
 Of loving pairs a score or two,
 Whose vows, whose sighs, whose hopes, whose
 fears
 Must claim your smiles or draw your tears.

And you, less gentle readers male,
 Who may prefer a thrilling tale,
 A tale that takes away your breath,
 Of murder, fire, or sudden death,
 The "Argus," with attention due,
 Provides an equal treat for you.

There is no ghost, however rare,
The " Argus " here has failed to snare,
No horror yet so dark and drear
But looms in all its darkness here,
No crime of present or of past
That is not here at length surpassed.
And should your fancy fail at all,
The Painter's art supplies it all.

M. E. H.

*Dedicatory Ode to the Christmas Number of
the " Argus," 1874.*

Now at last, King Winter
Comes in regal gear,
As we have not seen him
Come for many a year.
All his royal mantle
Lined with ermine snow,
And with frost-cut jewels
All his crown aglow.
He has set his banner
White upon the hills,
He has sealed and conquered
All the laughing rills.
Mightiest of the seasons !
To the young and gay,
To the strong and healthful
Pleasant in thy sway.

Bright thy happy mornings,
Clear and cold and keen,
Brighter still thy evenings
By the firelight sheen.
But if thou would'st listen
To a ceaseless hymn,
Set thy court, O Winter !
Where the skaters skim.
Like a star uprising
In the heart of night,
Mid the cold and darkness,
Bloom o' Christmas might.
Ring, ye iron voices,
Through the frosty air,
Let the gracious tidings
Echo everywhere.
To Earth's fullest limits
May the lesson reach
Eighteen hundred winters
Yet have failed to teach.
Time of feast and leisure,
Time of song and mirth,
When long-parted kinsmen
Meet around the hearth.
Then amidst the comers
Welcomed at the door,
Comes the "Argus" annual
With its Christmas store.

Wit and fun and fancy
All together brought,
And by love and kinship
Skilfully enwrought.
Bright as in the cover
It is but akin
To the brilliant pages
That you find within.
Gay with many a picture,
Many a fair conceit,
Lovers brave and gallant,
Maidens fair and sweet.
Pass then, happy "Argus,"
On to near and dear,
With a merry Christmas
And a glad New Year.

M. E. H.

CHAPTER III

THE "MIDGE"

THE life which began at Hurstbourne Priors in 1868, and which went on with little in the way of change for the next twelve years, is recorded in all its details in a pile of little amateur journals, a chronicle such as many a household of young people has produced and which, lasting for six years, gives a fair idea of the surroundings and events which marked Marie's youth. In the pages of the "Midge" we grow familiar with the inmates of the house, their friends and servants, their interests and their worries. We become conversant with the haphazard character of Mr. Peter Hawker and the gossip as to his matrimonial intentions, with the erratic attentions of the lively young undergraduate neighbour, devoted to the whole family and reported to have proposed to Miss Julia Hawker 199 times. We read with interest of the varied course of lectures delivered by that young lady with all the infallibility of nineteen; we follow the

fortunes of the Hurstbourne Priors Local Temperance Society with its one member—a small groom whose strong tendency to drink was combated by Marie, who in spite of many discouragements devoted herself steadily to his reformation. We receive the impression of an easy hospitality, of a continual *va-et-vient* going on in the small circle, of the constant interchange of luncheons and dinners, of a banquet at which, in addition to the editor of the “Midge’s” own attractive family, no less than twelve members of the *élite* of the neighbourhood assisted, and in respect to which some misgivings prevailed, owing to the rumours emanating from a no less excellent authority than the hostess herself, to the effect that there was “nothing to eat and nobody to wait.”

An extract chosen as a fair sample from the “Court Intelligence” suggests that life was full of small social events among a limited circle of friends thoroughly at home with one another :

Tuesday : Lady Catherine Wallop lunched at the Garden.

Wednesday : The Garden party honoured Mr. and Mrs. Birch with their company at dinner.

Thursday : Miss Pitts and Mme. Berton
lunched at the Garden.

Friday : Mrs. Birch, Mrs. G. Murray, Miss
Thackeray, and Miss Reid lunched at
the Garden. Mr. H. Fennell, Mr. P.
and Miss Hawker honoured the Marchesa
Radicadone with their presence at dinner.
Mr. E. Hawker arrived at the Garden.

Saturday : Miss Hawker honoured Mrs
Harris with her presence at lunch.

Every winter private theatricals engaged the
energies of the neighbourhood, and the Hawkers
spent a great part of their time journeying
from their own house to that of their friends
the Birches, often in the most inclement
weather, rehearsing in more or less scanty
attire in a draughty coach-house, getting great
fun out of the vagaries of the performers and
the shortcomings of the staging. The fancy-
dress dances, the annual race meeting, the
family jokes against the victims of dressmakers
and bootmakers, the characters of the cats,
the vicissitudes of the stable, the joys and
sorrows of hunting days, long visits from
cousins, arguments, discussions, go to make
up an impression of a house of lively young
people, full of fun and merriment.

Yet perhaps we should not be justified in quoting copiously from such a chronicle if it were not that the humour with which it overflows is so essentially the same sort of humour which is found later in Marie Hawker's published writings. The laughter in it is so fresh and gay that we are carried along from page to page of the small, neat handwriting by an irresistible tide of drollery. From the grandiloquent leaders to the paragraphs by Mr. Phillup Bosch, whose task it is to pad corners, a witty turn is given to the most prosaic incidents. The subjects profess to range "from the merits of a cat to the demerits of a nation." The pet dog, a new bonnet, no trifle is too slight to awaken laughter. There could not be a better illustration of the insignificance of subject, the all-importance of treatment, where humour is concerned. Through the whole of life goes the light, drolling spirit. A change takes place in the household: "Miss Hawker hastens to contradict a report that the new servants were brought into the house in sacks to preserve their minds from contamination by the outgoing retainers." Mr. Fennell (whose special idiosyncrasy it was to meddle in domestic

matters) assists the new parlour-maid to lay the dinner-table. Marie's only impression of his scheme was that "everything anybody wanted was absent, but that its place was supplied by a gigantic silver centrepiece." We should like to have been present at the charades where Miss Hawker gave a lifelike impersonation of herself interviewing a boot-maker, or to have joined in the peals of laughter aroused by a small actor named Blackie, who enacted with much spirit the part of a pet lap-dog, the said Blackie having been created by Miss Hawker out of an old muff and boa. We can sympathise with Miss J. Hawker's discomfiture when the stable-boy, whose manners had been her peculiar care, questioned as to the origin of certain mysterious cloudy spots upon the glass, hastens to give the smiling reassurance that it is only his "'ot 'ands."

The "Siege of the Veteran Beau" makes a thrilling episode, and we are not surprised that on the visit to his ancient mother, upon which so many hopes had been founded, "Miss Hawker became hysterical more than once, and had to resort to various subterfuges for concealing her emotion."

We can imagine the conversation anent

Marie's new habit, when she execrated the tailor, Mrs. Fennell defended him, and Mr. Fennell, whose stories of a heroic past were generally received with some derision by his step-children, elucidated matters by describing the leaps he used to take when hunting in Berkshire.

Miss Hawker's ridicule spared neither the peculiar weaknesses of her family or her friends, much less her own. In the following extracts she makes fun of them all :

On Tuesday Mrs. Fennell entertained a luncheon party. After luncheon a meeting of a singular kind was held by the Rev. F. Lloyd, representing the Church, and Miss Hawker, representing the agricultural interest. Both the speakers being kind enough to raise their voices to concert pitch, everyone in the neighbourhood was able to enjoy the discussion. The style of argument was of the highest order, and consisted mainly of the abuse of the delegates by Mr. Lloyd and the abuse of the Church by Miss Hawker.

Library : A literary treat was conferred on the public by the arrival of one of the most remarkable poems this century has produced.

When we say it is by Mrs. T. B., that it is on the subject of Ritualism, and that it surpasses anything she has yet written, we have conveyed to our readers some faint idea of its power and general style.

Miss Hawker read it aloud on Saturday evening to the entire circle amidst profound emotion. The reader herself was often incoherent and speechless from excess of feeling. We may add that the metre is of a kind as yet unknown to the world.

It is with much regret that we feel ourselves compelled to call attention to the very unsatisfactory condition of our umbrella department. Now that we are approaching the height of the summer, the matter threatens to become serious.

Mr. Peter Hawker's celebrated Brollie, which has for some time been the mainstay of the family, though still admirably adapted for carrying in dry weather is only of use in wet to persons desirous of enjoying a shower bath and a walk at the same time.

Mrs. F.'s umbrella, though perfect in the steel work, is more or less destitute of the silk which fashionable life demands.

Most singular of all, Mr. F.'s umbrella, which has been carefully preserved in a drawer,

presents the most dilapidated appearance of any.

Several well-meant but unsuccessful efforts have been made to amend this lamentable condition of affairs.

A few days since two young ladies, having previous to entering the drawing-room, deposited their elegant little umbrellas in the passage, were, on pretence of seeing the garden, conducted out by another exit. Unfortunately they remembered and went back for their umbrellas.

A still more spirited effort was made on Monday. Mr. Baldie, who had been skilfully decoyed from the house without his umbrella, was just stepping into the carriage that was to take him to the station, when he remembered it. Mr. F. with admirable presence of mind assured him that it had been already placed at the back of the carriage : Mr. Baldie, however, who is intimately acquainted with the family, insisted on examining the umbrella-stand himself.

There is no reason, we think, for discouragement in the failure of these attempts. In both instances the owners were from north of the Tweed, and we trust there will be no remission of such efforts till our umbrella-stand is replenished.

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The chief subject of discussion this week has been the celebrated jump taken by Miss Hawker on Tuesday last, near Freefolk wood, when following the Vyne hounds. One gentleman describes it as two deep and wide ditches separated by a high and thick hedge. Another represents it as two ox fences and a stone wall, and a third considers it a hitherto undiscovered tributary of the Test, considerably wider than the main stream. Last but not least, a competent eye-witness, Miss Hawker's godchild, affirms it to have been five yards in width, and on some incredulity being expressed by members of the family who do *not* hunt, instantly declared it to have been quite six yards wide. Curiously enough no barrier answering to any one of these accounts is known to exist in the neighbourhood, and the conclusion is forced upon us that Miss Hawker has been the discoverer of an entirely new line of country. As to the suggestion that at the time Miss Hawker took the leap the obstacle consisted of two ruts and a small mound, and that it has since grown rapidly, we advise the courageous horsewoman to treat it with the scorn it deserves.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS. — "God-mother" wishes to know of books suitable for

a small pet-groom. They must be at once horsey and moral in tone. . . .

In our leading article of to-day we pay a debt of deference, too long deferred, to an important and revered body to which hitherto we have not had the opportunity of alluding: viz. Mr. Hawker's turkeys. These magnificent birds are a standing proof of the success, not too generally acknowledged, of amateur farming. The Budget Farm has absorbed, since Mr. Hawker took it in hand, a great deal of attention, a good deal of labour, and several hundred pounds of Mr. Hawker's money. The whole of this expenditure has now met with a ready and princely return in the shape of Mr. Hawker's turkeys. To these birds, Mr. Hawker, when asked if he has as yet realised any profits, points with modest pride. As may be imagined by our enormous circle of readers, Mr. Hawker's turkeys are the object of much devotion and respect to the retainers as well as to the family. "Have you seen the turkeys?" has become a set form of greeting, and "Beautiful turkeys, Mr. Hawker's," is a remark which is considered *de rigueur* by his servants to any of his relations passing the farm.

Miss Hawker, who is supposed to pass a great

part of the day at the farm, has exhausted every complimentary epithet in the English language, and has gazed on them so long and so often and been compelled to weigh them by holding them up by the feet (an operation most painful to the feelings), that she has serious fears of suffering from Turkey on the Brain. We have great pleasure in announcing that the beauty of these illustrious beings is almost mature, and that the lady who has watched over them from childhood's hour is about to seek situations for them in the houses of the neighbouring nobility, clergy, and gentry.

THE FASHIONS.—Toilettes are at present subdued in character, the new winter dresses having not yet arrived. Shawls, especially tartan plaids, will be *à la mode* till Miss Hawker has bought a new coat.

Probably most people will think that the following scene argues great dependence on the part of Miss Hawker's relations, upon her good humour and easygoing characteristics.

CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT.—An action was brought by Miss Hawker against her family. Miss Hawker said that her family were in the habit of opening and perusing her letters before she had herself seen them. Being of a peaceable character, she had made no objection to

this eccentricity so long as they were kind enough to allow her to read them afterwards. On Friday last, however, on entering the house Miss Hawker heard shouts of laughter and discovered Mrs. Fennell engaged in reading to a large circle of friends a letter which had just arrived for Miss Hawker. Miss Hawker observed that there was a limit to her patience and that she considered that the first perusal of her letters should be confined to relations of her own. A compromise was effected, Miss Hawker's family engaging not to read her letters aloud, without her consent, to any more distant relative than a fifth cousin.

QUERY wishes to know if it is true that Mr. Hawker said he considered the presence of the audience a mistake in private theatricals ?

NIMROD wishes to know if one may not hold on by the pommel when learning to ride, what *is* one to hold on by ? (ED.—The reins, of course.)

LITERATURE.—*Hints for Household Management*, by a housekeeper of five weeks standing. The title of an instructive book shortly to be published. We append a few quotations :

1. Never have any keys : they are always getting lost and hindering one.

2. In ordinary dinners much difficulty will be avoided by consulting your own tastes entirely. It is impossible to please everyone, and almost impossible to please anyone completely but oneself.

3. Keeping accounts is the greatest mistake. It only shows you how much money you have lost, without helping you to recover it.

4. Be very careful in ordering dinner not to make remarks upon joints. They are most confusing things, and you are almost sure to say something foolish.

5. In writing an order it is as well to say what you mean, as trades-people are extremely matter-of-fact.

Miss Hawker has received from Mr. J. Birch a valentine in which she is represented as hunting not a fox, but the God of Love. Miss Hawker resents the bare suggestion that any matrimonial designs could have attracted her to the cover-side in a country where there are no eligible men.

THE MATRIMONIAL BUREAU.—It is our duty to-day to address some words of serious remonstrance to the younger branches of that family to which we have the honour to belong. By the family we mean all the descendants of

the allied houses of Hawker whom we call cousins, and more particularly the two houses of Radnor and Garden, so long and so closely united by association and affection.

The subject of age is so delicate a one that we would not willingly approach it, but we may without offence assert that the majority of us will never see twenty again. Such being the case, is it not a disgraceful fact that, with the honourable exception of Mrs. Walter Sheean, not one of us has yet been married. This lamentable state of affairs arises, we fear, from a combination of selfishness and indolence which induces everyone to accept for him or herself the easy rôle of bachelor or old maid, but on persons unacquainted with our illustrious and delightful family it may tend to produce a false impression of our attractions. In order to stimulate our languid energies it has been proposed that a prize should be offered to the first member who shall enter the Holy Estate. The prize shall be provided by the remaining members, and a paper will circulate with this No. on which the family are requested to state the amount they will contribute to this reward of merit. Mr. P. Hawker suggests that in the event of the new relation-in-law bringing a title into the family, subscriptions shall be doubled.



THE GARDEN

It is gratifying to learn that soon after the formation of the Matrimonial Presentation Fund, a "female cousin" is induced to take the leap and reaps a harvest of £2, 16s. 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

A good deal of harmless amusement has been afforded the Miss Hawkers by a riding habit which is being manufactured for the eldest at Whitchurch. As every time the habit is tried on it possesses some new fault, it is probable that it may continue to exercise their patience and ingenuity for some weeks, at the end of which perhaps *Myra* will be able to suggest what to make it into.¹

We shall hardly be believed, but every member of the family now possesses an umbrella. Mr. Hawker in a fit of reckless extravagance, has had his re-done up, and Mrs. Fennell with singular good luck has possessed herself of *three* in Scotland, where the family is not well known.

H.P. TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.—A motto has at last been discovered which is supposed to express the leading sentiment of this Society from the President to the members: "Better be a cup too high than a cup too low."

¹ *Myra's Journal* was a favourite *vade mecum* of fashion in the 'seventies, and the editor's ingenious suggestions extremely mirth-provoking.

CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT—Miss J. Hawker was brought up before Mrs. Justice Fennell charged with attempt to defraud Miss Hawker. Miss Hawker said that, as Mrs. Fennell was probably aware, she and her sister belonged to an exchange society consisting only of themselves, in which at the beginning of every season a brisk interchange of wearing apparel took place. Some time since Miss Hawker gave Miss J. Hawker a cerise silk skirt and bodice in exchange for a blue silk skirt. Not having any immediate need of the latter she did not ask for it at the time. Some months later another exchange took place, when Miss Hawker again received the silk skirt. A few days since when for an elegant velvet-trimmed polonaise she was *again* offered “a blue silk skirt,” the words being now familiar, it flashed across her that she had bought this blue silk skirt three times over! To add to her indignation she then discovered that in the meantime Miss J. Hawker had been wearing the said blue silk skirt as a petticoat to save her own. (Sensation in court.)

Miss J. Hawker, who was rendered inaudible by extreme emotion, said that she had only twice offered the same “blue silk skirt,” and as Miss Hawker seemed satisfied with the bargain, she did not see that anyone need be

blamed. As for wearing it, as Miss Hawker would not take it away and as her room was very small, the only place she had to put it was on herself.

Mrs. Mallet has been hearing noises again, in describing which she paid an indirect compliment to Miss Hawker's fairy-like step. "It were a 'eavy noise. I cannot compare it to h'anything but a draggin' a 'eavy pile of furniture, which I really believed, Miss, it were you, a-comin' upstairs to call me."

A few days since, Miss J. Hawker gave a thrilling lecture on a subject which she has been studying for years: viz. the expression of a parrot's beak. A very false impression of the parrot's expression prevails, owing to the fatal error of mistaking his beak for his nose, whereas, Miss J. Hawker assures us, it is his upper lip. Owing to the common error the true expression of this noble bird has been hitherto obscured.

H.P.L.T.S.—The condition of the Society is in a most satisfactory state. The President reports that its evenings are devoted to planting potatoes. Indeed so constant has the member described himself in his devotion to this refined pastime that some incredulity has been expressed as to the necessary extent of

his potato ground. One fiendish mind has ventured to suggest that planting a row of potatoes may be a playful synonym for "swallowing a pint of beer" at Hutchins's.

The following report has been sent us of the way in which an anecdote is told when several members of the same family are present :

First Member. "Oh, I must tell you a most amusing story. We were once staying at a place near Blank——"

Second M. "No, it was not near Blank, it was near Dash."

First M. "No, I mean Blank—Blank was only four miles away."

Third M. "Oh, never mind, go on with the story."

First M. "Well, one evening we went for a walk——"

Second M. "No, it was in the morning."

First M. "Oh, tell the story yourself."

Second M. "Well, one morning A and B and I——"

Third M. "No, A wasn't there."

Second M. "Yes, he was."

First M. "No, he had gone to Blank."

Second M. "Oh, how you do confuse me. He was there."

Third M. "No, he wasn't, he——"

Second M. "Yes, he was. Don't you remember he said——"

First M. "No, no, I tell you he wasn't," and so on for half an hour. Hearer is much interested.

We have a rival case to the Balham mystery in the mysterious death of one of Mr. Fennell's cows.

To his constant boasting as to his youthful feats of prowess, "When he lived in Berkshire," their stepfather joined an excessive sensitiveness on the subject of his health, and according to his own showing was continually about to succumb to some new form of illness.

HURSTBOURNE DEBATING SOCIETY.—An animated debate took place between Mr. Fennell and Miss Hawker as to the right of the latter to call a pain in her back, lumbago. Mr. Fennell spoke with some asperity and appeared to regard Miss Hawker's conduct as coming under the head of the Act against trespassers. Miss Hawker objected to Mr. Fennell's remonstrating with her, he having been permitted, unmolested, to assume to himself nearly every dangerous and complicated disease to be found in the Medical Dictionary.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—A lady wishes to enquire if it is true that Mr. Fennell, on hearing the account of the celebrated Bonds-

man's diseased hoof, said he had suffered from exactly the same complaint when living in Berkshire.

The Editor believes that he did *instinctively* say so.

There is nothing like imparting a little variety to the ordinary events of life. Nothing can in a general way be more prosaic than the arrival at home of any member from a visit. He mentions his train, the carriage is sent to meet him, and he arrives about the hour at which he is expected. The following simple method of enlivening this monotonous programme was invented by Mr. P. Hawker :

Write that you are coming home on Friday. On Thursday telegraph that you have changed your mind and are coming on Saturday by the early train and request the presence of everything you can summon in the way of bailiff, groom, and keeper. By the time all these orders have been given, telegraph again that you have mistaken the trains and are coming by the midday express which your relatives must manage to have stopped for you. Finally telegraph to the coachman at the station that you have missed the express and are coming

by another line, and that he must at once hasten to meet you at another station in a different part of the country.

OUR VISITORS.—Mr. Lewis Shedden complained that Miss E. Baldie had attacked him with a red-hot poker. Miss Baldie in extenuation said the poker was not *red-hot*.

H.P.L.T.S.—Mr. Fennell has founded a similar society in which the number of members is the same (one)—the H.P.L. *Abstinence* Society. We learn that the member of the H.P.L. Temperance Society speaks in terms of strong and virtuous indignation of the intemperance of the member of the H.P.L.A. Society. This may be compared to the Publican taking on the airs of the Pharisee.

As we are upon the verge of ruin, persons acquainted with us will not be surprised to hear we are going to build a new greenhouse.

The Aberdonians¹ have started a Debating Society. On Saturday they held a long and animated discussion on "Intellect." This Society is not to be confounded with the H.P.S. Its rules are quite different. In the A.D.S. only two members may speak at once, and no

¹ This was a pet term for the Hawker coterie, in allusion to their Scottish parentage.

one may become personal until they have decidedly the worst of the argument.

Among the dissipations which render this place such a whirl of gaiety, a visit to Andover is among the most thrilling. A trip to this festive city is always the signal for much excitement, running up and down stairs and scurrying hither and thither in search of lost memoranda.

Before starting, a consultation is always held as to whether the carriage shall be burdened by the enormous weight of two umbrellas.

"Holloway, do you think it is going to rain?"

"Wa-a-l, there seems some starms a-flyin' about, but I don't think we shall 'ave much to 'urt, Miss."

"Well, perhaps we had better take them. Now we're ready."

"Oh, Marie, please wait a minute. I've forgotten my spectacles."

Once off, calm succeeds the storm, broken at intervals by discussions of things forgotten. Last time it was the library books. The difficulty was cleverly overcome by Miss Hawker going into the library and saying pleasantly but firmly, "Oh, we have come to change our

books, only we forgot to bring the others, but I will take the new books now and let you have the old ones on Friday, when the bailiff comes in." (This being Monday.)

During the shopping Miss Hawker invariably tries to cheat with the change and is as invariably cheated.

At the confectioner's they are always surprised to find that the buns are made with rancid butter.

The last feature of the entertainment is the return home, where the servants have by this time remembered all the things they want in Andover.

Of the even smaller neighbouring town, the "Midge" reports that Mrs. Fennell, on returning from London, exclaimed complacently that, "after all, there is no place for shopping like Whitchurch."

In the evening of a pouring wet day Miss J. Hawker implored her sister to suggest some enlivening amusement. That lady instantly proposed an analysis of their accounts for the year. In her innocence Miss J. Hawker accepted this advice, but solemnly warns anyone else against it except as a remedy for over-boisterous spirits. She has not smiled since.

The sufferings of the Miss Hawkers at the

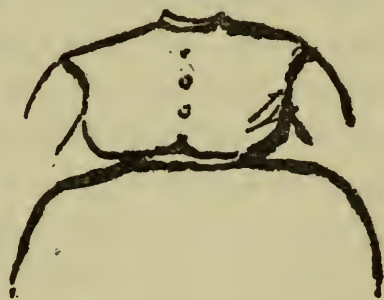
hands of country dressmakers are a constant topic of the magazine. The vicissitudes of new dresses are described with much feeling—as for instance when a request for more room across the chest is crushed with the remark, “Many people are quite flat there—Mrs. Twitchem is.”

New attempts are continually being made to cope with the difficulty.

The arrival of the “bodice perpetuel” has been the signal for an outbreak of dressmaking fever. This wonderful invention, which is supposed to render the art for ever easy, was so long in making its appearance that serious fears were entertained as to its existence save in “Myra’s” brain. It is, however, an impressive proof of the many onerous duties transacted by our revered postmistress, Mrs. Barnes, that she has never time to re-pack any parcel that she has opened, so that when the “bodice perpetuel” appeared, carelessly wound round with a piece of torn brown paper, it became evident that Mrs. Barnes had been trying to fit the bodice on herself, a courageous attempt on the part of that portly individual, as the “bodice perpetuel” is *not* also a “bodice universelle.” Miss Hawker is now engaged on the manufacture of a washing summer dress which it is confidently hoped may be finished by Christmas.

H.P.L.T.S.—A very unsatisfactory report reaches us. The member's insubordination has been such that the President has serious thoughts of dissolving the Society. She will never fail to attribute its downfall to the gigantic pyramid of empty bottles which has so disgraced the stable yard. It is a painful fact that after spending an afternoon in removing this astounding pile, he was seized with the painful lapse to which we have alluded.

THE IDEAL FIGURE.—Persons acquainted with this family will not be surprised to hear that Miss J. Hawker's new dress which has just arrived from London is lovely, but does not fit. A discussion arose at lunch as to the curious and painful fact that nothing can induce Miss Nicol to make the Miss Hawkers' dresses fit them. Mr. P. Hawker suggested that the fault lay in all probability in his sisters' figures, and in support of this satisfying theory quoted the remarks of an eminent local modiste. Mrs. F. thought Miss Nicol's mistake lay in making the dress for "an ideal figure" instead of that of Miss J. Hawker. Our artist, after a careful study of the dress sent by Miss Nicol,



has been able to furnish a sketch of what, according to her, it ought to be.

THE COMFORTER.—About five autumns ago, it may be remembered, Miss Hawker begged the illustrious President of the S.P.S. to select some knitted article which she might have the honour of working for his acceptance. The noble President chose a comforter, and from that day to this has heard nothing more of the offer. However, *tout vient à qui sait attendre*, and the public will learn with interest that the gigantic task is actually undertaken.

On Friday a crowded meeting was held to discuss the stitch. Miss J. Hawker moved that it should be worked in the Idiot stitch, for, as its name implied, it was peculiarly suited to Miss Hawker's capacity. Mrs. Fennell moved as an amendment that the Brioche stitch should be chosen. It was more showy and quite simple. The rule was, "make one, slip one, and make two together," and if Miss Hawker made a point of repeating this simple and rhythmic tune continuously, she could hardly fail. The drawback, however, she could not conceal from Miss Hawker was that a mistake once made was almost irremediable and the work must be commenced from the very beginning. At these words Miss Hawker said she thought she would rather have the

Idiot stitch. Mrs. Fennell said the Brioche stitch was much more comfortable for the wearer and that really his feelings deserved some consideration. This arrangement finally triumphed and a course of instruction began, during which Miss Hawker often reverted with regret to the thought of the Idiot stitch.

We hear that in consequence of the fatal character of anything like a mistake, the progress of the lady is not so remarkable as her industry. On Saturday evening it was said that the work was unpicked and begun again for the nineteenth time.

H.P.L.T.S.—Thursday last was the anniversary of this interesting Society. Within the last few months there has been great insubordination on the part of the member. A few days since he spent a considerable time at that accursed abode which he is solemnly pledged to avoid, and the following day it is said that he celebrated the anniversary of his entrance into the H.P.L.T.S: by drinking till he could hardly walk. Under the circumstances the public will not be surprised to hear that the President threatens to dissolve the Society.

LATER.—The President, though still depressed, is engaged in collecting subscriptions towards a tonic for the member.

A few nights since some delightful ghost stories were told on the terrace. One in particular was highly original in having no ghost at all. It had, however, a long array of green-houses, vineries and gardeners, and a magnificent house, all belonging to the father of the narrator.

WEDNESDAY.—*June* 1879, H.P. Debating Society. On the last day of Stockbridge races a symposium was held, the speakers consisting of Mr. Fennell and Mr. and Miss Hawker. The subject discussed was the justification of gambling. The discussion was conducted in the usual animated manner, and the uproar was more deafening than anything that has been heard for some time. Miss Hawker was the first to get hoarse, and may therefore be considered to have been decidedly worsted. At the conclusion it was decided that not one of the speakers had the faintest idea of what either of the others meant. A lady present ventured to suggest that this was partly owing to the genial Hurstbourne Garden fashion of all speaking at once. We learn that all the members have been more or less deaf since, except one lady who, hearing that an argument was about to take place, took the precaution of stopping her ears with cotton-wool.

ADVENT OF MR. BLOGGS.—*August* 1879. The event of the week, the month, the year, has been the arrival of a Welsh gentleman of Scotch extraction. The Welsh gentleman is about two inches high and ten inches long. Each ear is as large as his whole body. His eyes are large, dark and exquisitely beautiful. His complexion is of a delicate fawn. His accomplishments are many and brilliant. He can tear lace, grind buttons, pull braid off tablecloths, and run away with anything not bigger than himself. He possesses a clear silvery bark which he uses on every possible occasion. As to his name, his owner, Miss J. Hawker, says it is Bloaggs, pronounced Bloggs. Everybody is at the feet of this new idol except Rory, who remarked to Miss Hawker that with two of her own kittens in the house there was little need to send to Wales for pets.

CHAPTER IV

INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES

1880-1885

IN 1880 Marie Hawker's only sister, her junior by seven years, married her distant cousin, Mr. Harry Hawker. They took a house in the immediate neighbourhood of Hurstbourne, so that the separation was felt as little as possible. Still the change was a great one. Marie gave up her riding, not caring to go out alone. Fewer visitors came to the house. She had never cared for dancing, and the taste for parties was dying away and came finally to an end when the incentive of accompanying a young girl no longer existed.

It would be impossible to give a fair idea of Marie's life without touching on her relations with her stepfather, and no one now remains to be distressed by the allusion. Though his stepchildren had always endeavoured to treat

him with respect and cordiality, he and Marie had from the first been inimical to one another. Mr. Fennell could not understand raillery, he divined a critical attitude towards himself, he was extremely jealous of Mrs. Fennell's affection for her daughter and always made a point of interrupting anything like a *tête-à-tête*. When they had been a few years at Hurstbourne an unlucky occurrence increased his resentful feelings. From some joke among the stepchildren and their cousins he was known to themselves as "Dear old Friend," shortened to D.O.F. By ill-luck he came across and read a letter from Marie to a cousin in which the nickname was used. Instead of asking her for an explanation—perhaps not liking to avow that he had read the letter—he referred the meaning to his brother who happened to be staying at the house, and the latter's genial interpretation that it probably meant "Damned old Fool" was accepted by him as one which he could not afterwards be persuaded to give up.

With her sister married and her brother constantly away, life became more uncongenial, and at one time Marie thought it would be better to leave home. She was a good deal

thrown back upon herself, and she took to writing in earnest and to cultivating her taste for it by serious study.

Her best refuge was with her friend, Lady Camilla Wallop. Lord Portsmouth and his family had gone to live on his Devonshire estate, leaving his second daughter to keep house for her brother, Lord Lymington. Lady Camilla's high-minded nature, her entire unworldliness, her keen sense of humour and delicate incisive judgment, made the strongest appeal to Marie's critical taste and satisfied her exacting standards. They met constantly, and she speaks of the talks that took place in "the old arbour." The surroundings of Hurstbourne House have been in some measure transformed to suit more modern ideas of gardening, but the little arbour, a dainty eighteenth-century erection of trellised woodwork, half shut in by a curving red brick wall of which the rosy, lichen-dimmed surface gives a warmth to clustering creepers, still looks out on a sequestered pleasance round which giant elms make an impenetrable circle, and is as cool and quiet as in the days when the two friends sat there, reading and talking through the long summer afternoons.

In *Old Hampshire Vignettes*, under the name of "Lady Ann," Marie has left a lightly touched record of her friend, in the old home upon the beech-crowned heights, where the deer browse slowly on through sun and shade and the dust and din beyond are shut off, as from some enchanted garden by phalanxes of immemorial trees :

" . . . The fragrance of that sheltered and secluded past might be felt in all Lady Ann's words and ways. It was an essential part of her singularity that she never attempted to force upon others her peculiar sentiments or views, but spoke of them humbly, as the possible symptom of inferior rather than superior intelligence. 'Everybody is clever,' said a great London editor, 'but Lady Ann has a mind.' It was a mind strengthened and enriched by that patient, loving, lifelong study of the best that has been written, which is surely what we mean by culture."

Marie has left a record of the books she read during the following years. Not merely a list of names, but several MS. books filled with quotations. She studied the history of the Irish past, O'Brien's *Fifty Years of Con-*

cessions to Ireland, Sullivan's *New Ireland*, much of Froude and Lecky, and became an ardent Home Ruler. Though former generations of her family had always been what are known as "staunch Conservatives," her sympathies in politics were by temperament with the Liberal party, and such books as Morley's *Life of Cobden* and Cobbett's *Poor Man's Friend* moved her to a vigorous championship of the working classes. Her foreign studies included *Lettres de Boudon*, much of Molière and Sainte-Beuve, Renan's *Vie de Jésus*. The mystic and religious element in her, afterwards to become so strong, led her to Hinton's *Religion and Philosophy*, to Jacqueline Pascal and Lewes's *History of Philosophy*, and H. Maudsley's *Body and Will* and *Pathology of the Mind*. Flaubert's *Lettres* had already a special interest for her, and *Le Roman Russe* of de Vogüé and *La pessimisme dans le Roman*, but it is perhaps more surprising to find her embarking on such books as Maine's *Ancient Law*, Mill's *Logic*, Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics*, Professor Clifford's works, and Huxley's *Lay Sermons*. Sometimes she adds a critical comment to her extracts, as on a study of De Quincey by a well-known writer she ob-

serves "—— ———'s incapacity for holding her tongue on irrelevant matters, which is a sign of intellectual weakness: her incapacity for keeping her emotions, especially vituperative ones, to herself, which is a sign of moral vulgarity."

At this time a few short essays and stories from her pen had been published in various magazines. One on "Alfred Tennyson," which appeared in *Modern Thought* in July 1882, seems to have been the very first. It is five pages long, and signed M. E. Hawker. A proof for an article on Mme. Récamier lies among her papers. Both essays are thoughtful and careful, but it was not on such lines that her real bent in literature was to develop. Certain little stories, "Advice," "Was it a Ghost?" and others, which were printed during these early years in the *Argosy* and other obscure magazines, indicate more surely the facility for and significance in dialogue for which her writing was afterwards so remarkable. The excellence of her work was no product of chance. She read and wrote, she pruned and polished. Among her MS. books is one which chronicles the aspect of nature from day to day, the changes of the sky, the

look of the winter fields. She brings before us the very marrow of the early spring day, when the village children wander with their scant handfuls of cuckoo flowers and celandines, and the March wind blows the dust in clouds along the hard white roads. She worked on for her own satisfaction, developing a higher ideal and greater finish of execution, but she had no connection with the world of letters, and she met with the usual fate of the short-story writer, having many contributions returned and one accepted now and again.

It was in 1883 that Marie began to keep the manuscript notes that, off and on, she continued to write for the rest of her life. These notes do not constitute a diary in the ordinary sense of a record from day to day. They include accounts and descriptions of theatricals, visits and visitors. Any good story she hears finds a place, and very soon the lighter entries are interspersed with what she herself calls "thought notes." Sometimes she gives circumstantial details of some domestic scene, evidently finding it a relief to her mind to confide in the discreet pages of her manuscript book.

Early in 1885 Lord Lymington married, and her friend, Lady Camilla, no longer made her

home at Hurstbourne. Their friendship was still kept up, after Lady Camilla's marriage in 1888, to Sir William Brampton Gurdon, and until her death in 1894, but the old daily intercourse, the reading of the same books, the meeting to talk them over, were things of the past.

"Camilla came to say goodbye," she writes on December 15th. "Our farewell was really spoken in my room, where she went to write her name in my birthday book. I stood in the dim light of the late afternoon, looking down at the little figure bent over my desk. Through the window behind her I could see the bare elm boughs dark against the livid sky. Farewell to many pleasant talks on the hilltops—in more senses than one—above the narrow scope of this dear dull little valley. . . .

"What is the pleasure of true companionship? I think it is the delightful sensation of being instantly and easily understood when one is most essentially oneself. Sympathy in pleasure or in pain is always delightful. For the idealist, living chiefly among people occupied with the concrete, existence is not merely lonely, but fatiguing. It is as if he or she were talking a foreign language. Oh the rest as well as the joy of being able for a little to speak one's own native tongue. 'Does she come from my own

country ? ' was Lady G.'s way of putting it to Camilla. Probably Lady G. was of a different type and came from a different country, but she expressed the same sympathy for the bent of her own tastes and interests.

"Remember the various excellent, sensible, nay, clever people, to whom the finer shades of sentiment are unknown, and yet one is apt to long for their stolid company after too long a spell of those aerial but also flimsy personalities that subsist on sentiment alone. But, after all, the half tints of feeling and perception have a great charm, seductive as that in the sphere of colour, the faint lilacs, olive greens and salmon pinks, so that we sometimes almost shrink from the positive scarlets and azures.

"The people who watch the spectacle of life are always fewer as modern life leaves less leisure for watching anything, and still fewer those spectators who not only watch but discriminate with the admiration of a cultivated taste for much that the uninitiated neither notice nor appreciate—all these in nine cases out of ten must resign themselves to be lonely. They are the stuff of which poets are made, and though they may not themselves be articulate, they pay the penalty of being highly connected. It is not only in the mechanical arts that special trades have their special ailments.

“*Dec. 20.*—Very cold and just enough snow fallen to cover with sparse powder the fields and roads. A warm pink flush covers all the air ocean, just above the zenith gleams a little new moon, a crescent of bluish silver.

“*Dec. 21.*—Exquisite view standing near the lower mill. The old bridge stands out dark against the delicate background. The glassy river reflects the pure pale yellow and dim red of the sky. On the bank beyond, soft brown willows and trees delicate as spectres in faint lilac. The golden ball of the sun just touches a bank of violet cloud which broods on the horizon line.

“Lady C. told me that Florence Nightingale, on being introduced to a gentleman who had a reputation for telling good stories, immediately begged for one. He told her the following. Some great man was taking his friends over his newly built house. One of the party would not admire it and said there were too many anachronisms. ‘Oh,’ said a lady who was noted for toadyism and who had been unstinted in her flattery, ‘don’t you like anachronisms? I think they are such a beautiful ornament.’ The best part of the story is that the gentleman afterwards confessed that he had invented it on the spur of the moment.”

STUDY FOR A PLEASANT DAY.—The day is sunless, dark and rainy. A wind surges woe-fully in the chimney and in the dripping laurels. Fortune has just dealt a sharp buffet in the shape of a rejected MS. She has had a not very good night, her head aches and her brain hitches like a machine out of gear. Worst of all, composition does not flow at all. Page after page of stuttering and stammering sentences are torn up. The work at last is put aside in despair and the clock sounds unmercifully the flight of another precious morning.

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CHAPTER V

SOCIETY, HIGH AND LOW

1886-1887

DURING these years Miss Hawker paid visits which took her into fashionable society. She stays with a party of people in Hertfordshire, where the company included the Spanish Ambassador and a number of Tory magnates, and where perhaps she met the counterpart of Mrs. Cosmo Fox. She writes two or three pages on fashionable indelicacy and fashionable greediness, notes some questionable stories with a good deal of disgust, gives a little vignette of one of the party, who, plump, dimpled and smiling, declares she is so weary of social life that she hates the sight of everybody and feels as if she could never smile again and thinks (while eating a hearty meal), that we all eat too much, and that as people get older they should eat less and give up meat.

People who live in what is called society, writes Marie, and especially those who live luxuriously, should be compelled at least once a year to undertake a Retreat—not in a monastic or conventual establishment, but in some excessively poor dwelling, to be entertained not by offices and sermons, but by poor fare and such hard work as they are capable of performing. Above all, their dress must be coarse and their surroundings squalid. On one day they must go without food until the evening, thereby learning what semi-starvation means. Having thus been made to feel what existence is to millions, there might be some chance of their seeing things as they really are.

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A gulf more impassable than that between different worlds severs me from the great majority of people I meet in society. It severs them too, it seems to me, from humanity at large. Sometimes a single sentence seems to measure the abyss. The looks and manner of many human beings express the complete satisfaction which ordinary society affords them, not because they are living up to any high standard, but simply drifting on the stream. The routine of X.'s life unfolded before me as she discoursed of her doings and

interests. What Canon Carter describes as "toy-duties." A far less amiable person, shrewd and handsome, between sixty and seventy, enjoyed the autumn of her life as if it had been the most fruitful of existences. Time has not dulled the thrilling interest in the doings of people in her "own set," which constitutes the one great topic of fashionable society. Lady M., Mrs. N., Lord B., and their marriages, their children, their illnesses and their incomes : on these she gave and received information and speculated and reflected aloud all day long.

The oppression of Sunday observance was avoided by one lady in working for the poor. Another had a novel of G. Macdonald's which though pronounced "disgusting" was "quite a Sunday book."

LADY (*loq.*): "I never heard such silly words. I can't bear these silly sentimental songs. Something about the river and the fountains and the hills all being mated and that being a reason for his being mated too."

It was strange to hear two men talking politics in the train, discussing the question of Home Rule for Ireland, which belonged a few years back to the region of insensate dreams.

MR. GLADSTONE TO HIS WIFE: "I am

always speaking as if all your money belonged to me : as if *you* had married a great heiress."

GREAT SOLDIER.—Told story of the best man he had ever known. Instead of being, as we were prepared to hear, the noblest of mankind, proved to be a very capable servant subject to occasional fits of drunkenness. Did not admire courage much, finding it more troublesome than useful in the long run. Always sent the coward to the post of danger as more likely to look about and cry out than anyone else. (Doubtful how much "Bible truth" and how much modified by mischief.)

At breakfast the hostess, reading aloud a letter, came across an allusion to Mrs. Josephine Butler, who had done so much for the protection of women and young girls. At her name a little snigger went round the table. "And now in society," says A. C., "I always hear that snigger in everything."

At Hurstbourne Priors she met Miss Gladstone (Mrs. Harry Drew), who introduced her to a very good essay society. She also met Professor and Mrs. Fawcett and stayed with them.

Liberal as she was, Marie Hawker had a strong instinctive reverence for established authority and accepted principles.

Her sympathy with the poor villagers was deep and untiring, and while keenly alive to the humorous side of their outlook on life, she was no less conscious of their pathetic endurance and the resignation bred in them by generations of penury and subservience. She is still remembered and spoken of with respect and affection by those who were young men and women when she used to visit the old and sick, and she has left many notes of their quaint sayings and of their accounts of former days when life had been even harder for them :

THE OLD DOCTOR : There warn't no foolishness about 'im. "Aye," 'e'd zay to anyone with a bad throat, "'e wants a fuzzy-brush drawed up and down 'is throat," and if e'er a one was ill and you come to ask where 'e'd die or no, "What's that to you ?" 'e'd zay. "E'll die when 'is time comes." And if he come when you was at dinner, 'e'd look to zee what anyone 'ad. "Odd rot it !" 'e'd zay. "You've got new paize" (peas), "afore I 'ave."

Now Master 'Enery, 'e ain't got that way wi' 'im. What 'e 'ave to zay, 'e'll zay and no more. Oh Master 'Enery was brought up very different from the old gentleman.

OLD VILLAGER.—Betty Taylor (aged 74) says people used to be stronger. Her mother never slept more than three hours, week-days, in harvest time. Rose early, dressed her baby, cooked hot breakfast (bacon, greens and dunch pudding, flour and water), and carried breakfast and baby by sunrise to the Seven Barrows near Mitcheldever from Tufton. Worked in fields all day. Home again about six or seven. Did washing, &c., till eleven. Then to bed.

Mrs. Wood, talking of her severe illness, told me her husband said to her when she appeared to be at death's door, "I *cannot* say Thy will be done." "Never mind," said I, "you don't need. I'm going to get better." At the same time Mrs. Wood described a terrible internal tumour and a series of appalling operations, performed without chloroform (for Mrs. Wood would suffer anything rather than "lose her mind"). I listened with a heart unmoved and a sense of humour somewhat tickled, and as descriptions of physical suffering usually make me miserable, some of this want of feeling must be ascribed to Mrs. Wood's treatment of the ghastly theme, which was alert and cheerful in the extreme and suggested the comforting thought that pain to some people is little more than serious discomfort to others.

VILLAGE HUMOUR.—“So then we had an argyment; he said, ‘Yes, it was,’ and I said ‘No, it wasn’t.’”

Mrs. P.’s comments on her daughter’s marriage: “And he said everything that money could get, he should give her—what could he say more?”

Mrs. Taylor quoted, as an example of profound ingratitude, Mrs. Burrs, who being converted by the Wesleyans instantly went off and joined the Baptists.

The poorest usually gave the most readily to the Jubilee fund. Mrs. Okey said, “Her ’ave been a good Queen, ’ave her not? Her ’ave give us so many good things—the penny post and all, and we’ve ’ad no be-’eadings or thumbscrews; her is so merciful.”

Mr. L.’s last words before his death were to remind the nurses to cork up the champagne—the ruling spirit of fussiness and management strong to the very end.

1887.—The Home Rule Bill had just been drafted, and this led to

THE GREAT POLITICAL TEMPEST. It was certainly initiated by Ju, who offered her kitchen for an Anti-Coercion meeting. Tovey’s joyous letter of acceptance—appearance of the posters. Colonel Tippinge writes Ju long

letters of protest. Meanwhile Tovey and Co. entreat Mrs. H. Hawker and her sister to be present and to speak. Ju at last consents from devotion to duty. M. reluctantly follows suit from devotion to Ju. Correspondence with Colonel Tippinge still going on.

Day comes. Dress ourselves in our Sunday best, put on shamrock sprigs, bought for the occasion, and depart in Nichol's fly. Tovey and W. arrange proceedings and M. finds herself in the position of seconder. Mr. Elliott, the chairman, arrives, led by the reporter; at sight of them our sense of loneliness delightfully departs. Mr. Elliott is blind and Ju hopes that he may imagine himself in a vast hall, surrounded by great numbers. Mr. Elliott is introduced and congratulates himself on having found such *rarae aves* as Liberal ladies.

Labourers stumble and shuffle in. Daylight dies and lamps are lit. Tovey's speech. Terrible incidents first—allusion to a sheep-dog muzzled, when Tovey, carried away by his zeal, is led to say that muzzles had been inflicted in this neighbourhood in order to prevent shepherds' dogs catching rabbits. Here he appealed to a shepherd, who proceeded to make some sapient but prolix remarks on the subject of muzzles. Others joined in Chairman in a voice of agonised entreaty

"Excuse me, my dear sir, but question—question." This well over, the reading room, instead of the wrongs of Ireland, became the matter in hand. "Mr. Tovey needn't talk about coercion. He's as bad a coercionist as any of them. 'Cos a few boys got to playing in the reading room," &c. . . . More voices joined in. All seemed over. The chairman in an icy voice, "Gentlemen, will you please to observe that this question is utterly foreign to the matter in hand." Everything goes on again swimmingly. Gratifying allusions to the noble ladies who had come to help them in spite of the unkind things which had been said against them. Dobson, much embarrassed by being called upon to second a vote of thanks to Ju, remarks that he has "nothing to say against Mrs. 'Arry 'Awker."

Great anguish over the report of the speeches (in local papers), especially over the graceful finale ascribed to M. A rival meeting is instantly given at L. p. house and Colonel Tip-pinge enters into a long correspondence with Tovey.

Climbing Andover Hill in the twilight, I met a female tramp who said she had just come from Andover workhouse, adding condescendingly, "But it's a poor place."

David Cotton desired particularly that no

flowers should be put on his coffin. When wreaths arrived, however, Mrs. Cotton (much flattered) surmounted the difficulty by supposing that, for all we knew, he *might* have changed his mind.

DEATH IN THE VILLAGE.—In life this old hard-working washerwoman, not beautiful to begin with, was afterwards a disfigured, singularly ugly person. The majesty of Death never shone out more transplendently than in his transfiguration of her. It was nothing less. Beautiful he could not make her, but ugliness vanished beneath his touch. All unlovely hues were lost in the even pallor, like old ivory. All furrows of age and perplexity and pain were, if not smoothed away, then eclipsed by that smile of ineffable and triumphant repose which is the sign manual of Death. Shall I ever feel the awe and beauty of him more than I did in this peasant's garret, where there were neither flowers, nor lights, nor trappings of woe or earthly honour to announce his presence?

HURSTBOURNE PRIORS: VILLAGE PEOPLE.—Mrs. Sinney, accounting for the astonishing conduct of Mrs. Smith, which had at first been ascribed to drink—"I shall not wish it remembered as I said so, but all her life she's been given to



THEATRICALS AT DRAYTON PARK

PERFORMERS (from left to right) :

Back row: Mr. Peter Hawker, Mr. F. Birch, Mrs. Fennell, Mr.
Harry Birch, Mr. Jack Birch

Front row: Lionel Birch, Marie Hawker, George Birch

readin' nobbles, and 'tis always the same, as no doubt you've seen yourself, Mum, them as reads them nobbles, they've allus got that there skeered look in the h'eye." The same lady remarked, when it was proposed that a professional should play instead of Mrs. Tippinge, "What I says is, why whatever do we want with a confessional in the church when we've got Mrs. Tippinge on the premises"; and of Gladstone, "Why as to that there Gladstone, why Sinney himself might just as well resume the reins of government."

In her quiet village she never lacked subjects for observation. The neighbouring clergyman who paid a long visit, and after luncheon and a port-wine dessert gave forth some enlightened opinions on social and political matters, had probably not the slightest suspicion of how keenly the quiet woman with the short-sighted grey eyes, which by this time she had taken to veiling behind glasses, was taking stock of him :

Apropos of Ireland, he could not think why the Orangemen had not threatened to annihilate all the Roman Catholics. Mother suggested that they *had*. "But they have not

done anything." "Well, they could not exactly fight at once." "Yes, they could. If I were an Orangeman I should shoot *at once.*"

He attributes all the evils of the present day, not to Gladstone (and this at least is a gratifying variation on the popular jeremiad), but to Dissent and lack of Church discipline. He described the insubordinate state of the poor, and declared the poor were not so well cared for as they were forty years ago, "before all this education craze." He instanced in support that the poor did not make such good servants, or stay so long in one place, from which I deduce that the rich, not the poor, are not so well cared for. Mama ventured to say a word in defence of the love of change, upon which he diverged to emigration and unfolded a scheme by which all the worthless members of the community, "Those who would never do any good anywhere," should be compelled by the State to emigrate. He was furious at the irreligious conscience clause. Before it was passed he would compel all children, dissenters or non-dissenters, to receive episcopal instruction by this edict: "There are seven schooldays. Sunday is the first. If you don't come on the first you shall not come on the other six."

C. is a Tory and glories in the name. Dislikes many new things, but especially the upward movement of the democracy. Thinks it impossible and evidently feels it undesirable that there should ever cease to be an inferior class. Thought England was deteriorating because she was losing her pre-eminence in commerce as well as in rank. Like all tinged with Jingoism, always talks as if England were the chosen nation of God : and her supremacy the end of creation.

In 1883, Mr. Peter Hawker, Marie's only brother, had married a daughter of Colonel Tippinge, his tenant at Longparish. Mr. Hawker's health had for some time been an anxiety, and in 1889 he was ordered abroad after an illness. Marie went with him and her sister-in-law to Cannes. She much enjoyed the air and scenery of the Riviera and made notes and observations, some of which were afterwards utilised in the *Hôtel d'Angleterre* and some other stories :

CANNES.—The houses, hotels, and villas are so light in appearance, not only because of the red of their roofs and the soft white of their

walls, but because of their apparent fragile structure—only apparent, as they survive such a shaking as the earthquake has given them.

To church, by a winding, ascending way. We looked out over a wide view of Cannes and the sea and the dark purple mountains streaked with snow.

Great joy at hearing of Pigott's collapse proclaimed in the enemy's camp. "Oh, he must have been bribed."

The Plymouth sister at our hotel droops one corner of her eye and lifts one corner of her mouth. The effect is delightful and humorous and suggests the idea that she is boiling over with suppressed fun, as during the Pigott revelations, when her look and manner convinced me that she was a disguised Home Ruler.

In the evening the band came in with three real Neapolitans in sailor costume. The people grouped themselves about on the staircase and in the vestibule. The band of singers was stationed in the centre, just in front of the Egyptian nymph and other dark statues among the palms, holding lamps above their heads.

At *déjeuner* Pigott's flight was announced. My throat more hoarse than ever, so am unable

to shake hands in language with a white-haired foreigner who avows himself an admirer of Gladstone. The General struck dumb when I explain that I admire him too. A young Manchester Greek and myself lift up a feeble protest on his behalf in the drawing-room, where one lady did not hesitate to say that "God was merciful and there might be Liberals in Heaven." I said, "I don't think the Conservatives would be happy in Heaven if there were." When she answered, "Ah, it would not *be* Heaven without *them*."

JOURNEY TO GENOA.—So much time taken up getting tickets *visé'd* and bags examined, no time for lunch. Great etiquette between French and Italian porters most inconvenient to travellers. Off at last with amiable Englishman and his wife. Englishman gets us oranges. Coffee and rolls at Savona—sudden shrieks and exit. False alarm and return—coffee gone. Wearisome journey. Pause while bridge is mended—displeased English faces looking out. At last station and village in ruins. Officials search all trunks, consequently long pause in omnibus filled with English, Spanish, Germans, and Americans. American contempt at this arrangement. Arrival—gorgeous rooms—engage a carnival carriage for a short course.

We go out with a good-natured old person who shouts out the names—especially those clearly written up. Afterwards it goes on till late in the street below, when the first admiration gives way to weariness and disgust. News of Pigott's suicide.

Travellers sometimes refer everything to themselves. "The great battle of X. took place in such a year—because my grandmother was at Naples."

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTER STUDIES

It is not easy to decide when Marie Hawker made the "studies" referred to in the title of this chapter. Some probably towards the end of the 'eighties, shortly before *Mademoiselle Ixé* was written. Others later.

That they are all from people who came under her own observation is quite evident, and here and there one recognises traits and types of which she made use, but what is striking is the marked difference between these circumstantial portraits and the very light drawing, slight but telling, of the characters in her stories. She creates these firmly, but she never exaggerates, never labours any peculiarity. The humour and the reality of her personages does not depend in the least upon facetious descriptions. Yet as the following examples show, her observation was close and searching, not overlooking the superficial impression but piercing far below it; dispassionate but never unkind:

A., in her carriage and gestures was more mannish than a man. This effect was produced chiefly by squaring the elbows and turning them out. This with a long stride has a very mannish appearance. Went so far as to stroke one side of her chin as if caressing a moustache. Expression keen, self-contented. Her mannish bearing became less distinct when she was much interested, as in questions of morals and literature. Well read, intellectual. So intellectual, so alive to fine moral as well as artistic ideas, that one felt it was *her tribe*, not herself, which was *coarse-fibred*. Old-fashioned views of women, as spiteful, little-minded, and more affection and esteem for men.

G. was a conspicuously clever person, her cleverness being of that showy kind which impresses the least observant person. Analysed, it seemed to consist of natural ability, one ; advantage of circumstance, one ; fluency, one ; self-confidence, three. Lacking was the cramp of shyness or self-distrust, lacking also the sensitive tact and consideration for others, which it would seem is the quality of which too great timidity is the defect. This fearlessness, verging upon lack of refinement, was visible in a certain glance which it would be

unfair to call bold, but which was distinctly audacious. Natures like this have their own fine qualities, but to the inner province of the Kingdom, the country of childlike souls, they are absolutely incapable of entering. How is any searching discipline of sorrow and humiliation to reach them through that rampart of self-satisfaction in which they are fenced in? They worship the Monster Monarch, Success, literally for them the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Chief Potentate in a universe of dignities in which their own position is excellent. The salt of her character was her benevolence, of a Lady Bountiful kind. Her life was much occupied with good works, conceived in a queenly spirit. She carried the beneficence of the feudal system to perfection, visited assiduously all the tenants and villagers, knew all their affairs, their troubles and sorrows. She gave them attention, sympathy and advice. She sent out neat little dinners to the sick and women recovering from their confinements. She found situations for the girls and watched over them afterwards.

In the process of analysing character I discover that self-satisfaction supplies a very large element in the majority of the cheerful personalities.

Mr. B. shone with vivacity, compounded of considerable intelligence, animal vigour, fluency of language, and self-satisfaction enough to render it impossible for him to suppose that his companions could ever have too much of his talk. Into his concrete world there could by no means intrude the innumerable shadows that haunt the sphere of the abstract and the ideal. A form of religious belief he held, as well as religious feeling of a kind to which any form of sacrilege or irreverence is peculiarly abhorrent. Had an admirable contempt for overeating and indolence, of which he accused the majority of London men. Kind-hearted, capable not only of doing kind actions, but of taking prolonged trouble for the moral as well as the physical benefit of creatures he was interested in.

Striking by its absence was the lack of that mental diathesis which produces ennui, scepticism, discontent with life's conditions. To enjoy life and to reverence the Heavenly Powers without questioning either their existence or their goodness was instinctive to him. It was a part of his robust and almost coarse-grained taste to get on very well with old bores—if there was anything to be gained by it. But nothing makes one less fastidious in the enjoyment of society than the habit of talking

a good deal without enquiring too much into the interest with which one is heard.

THE REV. X. X.—Nothing is so difficult as to describe personal appearance, especially when it is not striking. The Rev. X. was lean, sandy-haired—indeed sandy was the emphatic, or perhaps, one should say, non-emphatic hue of his whole face. His features had the same lack of any striking characteristic. It was a negative face, noticeable for its lack of intellectual refinement—not that it was coarse, or animal or vulgar: these are all positive qualities.

The intonation was peculiar and, to select a mild adjective, homely—of a kind more to be looked for in the yeoman class. Its sing-song suggested a meaning apart from the words, set to a kind of undercurrent of protestation. Something like this: “I am a plain straightforward man, there is nothing grand about me—I like simple, old-fashioned ways.” And he had great simplicity, sturdiness, honesty, and considerable kindliness.

Still his manners and choice of language would not have suited a dignitary of the Church, nor did they always seem appropriate even to a humble pillar. Such expressions as “all over the shop” are not exactly venerable. He appeared to have adopted his manner when

he was a schoolboy, and never to have changed it afterwards.

His practical common-sense prevented his spoiling the reading room which proved the most successful in the diocese.

“They” (the young men of the parish) “came to me and said, ‘You’ve got a saddle room, sir, would you mind lending it to us to meet in every evening?’ So I said, ‘All right, you’ve fallen out with Blank. Now I don’t intend to have any bother with him. You can have the room, but you must manage the thing yourselves and pay your own expenses. You’ll have to make rules and you had better have a committee. I shouldn’t have a large one—three would do.’ ‘Well, sir, perhaps you would be one of the committee!’” And so I was. They paid a penny a week and they cleared all their expenses: fire, lighting, everything. Oh, we gave them some papers; and they had enough over for a supper at the end of the winter. They seemed as happy as possible. It’s a tiny bit of a place. They’re packed like herrings in a barrel. I believe if you put them into a large room they wouldn’t enjoy it half so much.”

With this homely character and its common-sense goes always great fairness. It is typically English.

A RETRIEVER PUPPY.—He is very soft and fluffy, as if not yet provided with a skeleton. Innocent baby eyes beneath the curve of a youthful brow, a mouth of infantile sweetness, and teeth whiter than almonds and sharper than a lancet. His carriage is rollicking and clumsy and his manners loving and impertinent. When he escapes from his proper sphere he enters the drawing-room with the tread of a behemoth. He has to be disentangled from the folds of my gown as if he were a bramble. He is captured by the housemaid amid repressed laughter and borne off to his temple; the kitchen, whence through the red swing-door come sounds of puppy-worship.

ATALANTA was a daughter of the gods, tall and lithe, fair-skinned and brown-haired; the effervescence of strong vitality in the spring of her movements and the sparkle of her eyes. Her appearance was almost as impressive as the reputation which preceded her, yet it was in contrast rather than in harmony with that reputation, for who is so free from commonplace prejudice as to expect to find a learned woman good-looking, graceful, and buoyant. No less uncommon was the impression she made as one saw more of her. Her grace, even rarer and more seductive than

her beauty, was displayed only to full advantage when she was playing, as on the slightest pretext she was ready to do. Playing at ball she compared with a picture by Leighton. Her chief beauty was the perfect setting of her head, the shape of her brows and the growth of the hair about them : so like what we have seen in Greek marbles. Her manner was as singular. Life came bubbling to the surface and she let it do so without a tinge of that self-repression, inevitable in the English race or approved by it. Most people compared with this Australian girl are monotonous in accentuation, lifeless in poverty of gesture. This outward quality corresponded with an absence of that Puritanic or ascetic sense which in us is the strongest survival of the waning religious order. It is a certain shame of enjoyment, and especially of physical and sensuous enjoyment, the open and earnest pursuit of " a good time " as not only allowable but her right. Added to this, in England, is the antiquated ideal which makes it unfeminine to have any fleshly desires at all.

Quite demonstrative was the appetite of this healthy representative of a new era for pleasant meat and drink and for " play," *i.e.* the social amusements of all kinds which took up so much time at college as almost to inter-

fere with work. Quite indirectly in her comments on art, literature, and people she showed a healthy love of purity and moral dignity, a repugnance to baseness of every kind. Withal, her religious and moral creed is still undefined and vacillating. She does not miss the support of something firmer and more concise, buoyed up and carried on as she is by the tide of fresh young life within her. Friendship is to her a kind of religion. "Her work always counted for more than her friends with her," she remarked disapprovingly of another illustrious girl. In the picture of Burne-Jones, the "Mermaid," others only noticed the mischievous face: she saw the tragedy of the triumph of evil, and enforced her point by quoting the motto appended by the painter, which she had to transcribe for us: "O unhappy one, you have had what you wished!" Her praise of Miss Clough was generous and enthusiastic: "Some people say unmarried women must become hard and self-centred, and she was just the reverse, so human, so full of interest in everything. She seemed to know what everyone wanted without being told. She asked me to dine with her and spoke to me about what I intended to do. How did she know? I never told her."

Very ready to applaud anything good said of

another. She had a way (slightly reminding me of the W.'s), of stretching her chin forward to the person—man or woman—she spoke to, when very much in earnest. “But don’t you think?—But you do see, don’t you?—You partly agree?” Looking up suddenly I found her eyes fixed upon me—she did not withdraw them but only smiled benignly, thereby giving the impression that her gaze had been a benevolent, not a critical one.

This last touch, it will be remembered, comes into “Cecilia de Noël.” There follows a sketch of a very different personality.

Her way of speaking was accentuated by the liveliness of her feelings and opinions. These varied with great rapidity owing to an amiable desire of agreeing with everybody, and to that peculiar machinery of the disposition that impels its possessor to agree with views before he has time to know exactly what they are. “Oh, I quite agree with you,” she would cry as from the very depth of conviction to the converse of some proposition that a few minutes before she had approved with equal enthusiasm. This almost mechanical impulsiveness was varied by what, after cries of interest, seemed a pensive solemnity. In this tone she would discourse on the beauty, wisdom, or importance of places, things, people

—her own friends and connections—of which and of whom the listeners were ignorant.

Her opinion she gave with some authority; it might be inaccurate, but it was never undecided.

Good-nature produced bounty. Sometimes it would carry her to a very high level of moral generosity. Then weakness allying itself with good-nature led her to absurd lengths in the way of spoiling certain people, confirmed by a love of patronage. Was often almost rude, partly from want of imagination, and in consequence from want of tact. Capable of visiting her irritability on the meek, while afraid to hold her own with the insolent. Her good-nature, egoism, and weakness dramatically represented by the houseful of spoilt servants, and her impertinent and ungrateful maid in particular.

Miss S.—The character like the face has always its background—at least when seen by the portrait painter. Miss S.'s was entirely prosaic, and that not because her life's work was to keep a boarding-house. Had she resided in a palace it would have been the same. Her shadow itself was prosaic, and wherever it fell the beautiful and the ideal were at once obscured. She was short and slight, brisk and alert, with a vivacity that contrasted with

her worn face and grey hair. She was subject to undue excitability under the influence of her own tongue. She never described or related anything without raising her voice as she proceeded to an unpleasant pitch and interjected her sentences with an ear-piercing laugh, for she had that love of the facetious which is so much more common than, and so incompatible with a sense of humour. Her spirits were a little forced, a manifestation of the pluck which was a quality of this wiry little person, fighting her way without champion or comrade through the thorny working world.

She lacked the grace that smooths the way. Of charm she was entirely destitute. She remarked one day, "I make so many enemies. I have a great many—some have never seen me."

"Then how can they be your enemies?"

"Oh, people say things. A lady came here once. 'Why, Miss S.,' she said, 'you are quite different from what I expected. I thought you were horrid. The Blanks said so.'"

On the other hand, she made some friends, superior to herself and admirably loyal. The basis of their and her characters, that sincerity which is drawn to sincerity, for Miss S. had the qualities of her defects and could not feign to be what she was not, even to advance her own interests.

With much clear sense and practical shrewdness she had a strain of singular naïveté often observable in persons whose view of life has not been enlarged by culture, not even that slighter culture that novel-reading supplies. Neither her own observation nor that of any other person had revealed to her the best known forms of human weakness and the almost proverbial manner in which those weaknesses are displayed. Her moral sense, however, if neither wide nor deep, was distinct enough and more trustworthy than that of many a more complex and highly strung character. One felt the loss was her own if the instinct of devotion had been denied and eyes whose range of earthly vision was so cramped could not be lifted to the hills or stars.

LADY D.—Lady D.'s was a character delightful and interesting to the novelist because it epitomised itself in action, as the story-teller should for ever strive that his characters should do. How far more potent than the verbal statement that Lady D. was compounded of self-confidence and great and utter incapability, is one of the many anecdotes treasured of her friends, of her insisting on giving the medicine to an invalid, giving it at the wrong time, slopping it over and pouring out the wrong quantity.

Lady D. was one of those persons who make a pleasure of grieving; she was generally in mourning of this sort for somebody or something, and with such woe filled up the vacant spaces of her life. Conceit becomes injurious to others when allied with marked incapacity. This unhappy combination made her a thorn in the flesh to all her neighbours.

A NEIGHBOUR.—The main object of his visit was to unfold a grievance. Of these he always had one on hand, which distracted him none the less because it appeared to others hardly worthy of notice. Importance, like size, is comparative, and a storm in a teapot is serious enough to the being whose horizon is circumscribed by the sides of the pot, whose firmament rises no higher than the teapot lid. His peace was shattered by the minor troubles that each week brought in its train. A volume from the parish library was missing, the school-children refused to attend a Bible-class because the roads were dirty, the bellringers would not ring, trials on which he dwelt with sighs and smiles of tragic bitterness. He had not Lady D.'s taste for grieving. He really suffered. He was one of those persons who is always kept well informed as to everything disagreeable that is being said of them. X. for example is never told that J. says he is mean or bad-

tempered or what not, and would be perfectly indifferent if he were, but W. attracts these confidences, receives them with credulity and writhes under them.

The real bonâ-fide fool is not stupid or silly—necessarily. He may be clever. He is always conceited and never learns from experience. Over and over and over again, he puts his hand into the fire and is burned—because he never can see that it is his action which produces the burn. It is the water in the other room, or some spiteful person somewhere else.

SKETCH.—Laughter louder than the occasion seemed to require, and the laugh itself was of the untrained *timbre*. Wore heel-less shoes. Lolloped back with his arms crossed behind his head while telling a story to ladies *standing*. Joke with young lady, rather servant-hallish. “Wipes his brow.” Touches, pulls, pushes.

CHAPTER VII

“MADEMOISELLE IXE”

A CHARMING story by M. E. Hawker, entitled “A Piece of Old China,” appeared in the *English Magazine* in December 1888. The *motif* itself is commonplace enough. A misunderstanding caused by the miscarriage of a letter, a discovery, a reconciliation brought about by the sudden sight of a piece of delft ware. The charm lies, as we should expect, in the group of characters, the sweet yet not insipid girl, the diffident suitor, the hard, grasping woman of means and fashion, and the art lies in the direct telling of the story, in the dramatic use made of slight incidents and in the swift reaching down to something below the surface, when the prosperous, middle-aged man waiting for his old love in the shabby room where he has found her after fifteen years, sees her as the door opens, withered, “like a flower that fades in its prime for lack of sunlight.”

“The old love was, as Charles had foreseen, unmistakably herself, but she was worn, she was haggard, she was so plain as to be almost ugly. Oh! if Miss Anstey could but have seen her, how she would have laughed such a rival to scorn.”

(Miss Anstey is the daughter of the stingy employer, whose purchase, after much beating down, of the piece of old china, has given the clue to the rich merchant.)

“But she would have deceived herself, for at sight of this poor wan face, Charles’s love did not falter, no, not for a moment, for it was at white heat, when all human affections merge into something like the one we rank the highest. Charles forgot at this instant almost as entirely as her mother might have done, whether she were pretty or ugly and saw only with such yearning as her mother might have felt the marks she bore of long-suffering and privation.”

It was now that Marie Hawker was ripe for achievement, that an inspiration came to her, which gave a striking subject to her practised technique. When she wrote *Mademoiselle Ixe*

she had never even known a Russian. A strain of music first awoke the keen sympathy which inspired the story. Her own music was very remarkable. Her execution was not only finished and excellent, but she had a beautiful touch and possessed in a marked degree the power of arousing feeling by her playing. She heard a Russian air played upon the zither. She describes it in *Mademoiselle Ixe*:

“The spirit thus revealed was anguish that cannot rest, torment that sees no outlet on earth, no comfort in heaven, the shadow of an unrighteous and pitiless dominion in which the hope of generations had fainted and their faith had waxed dim.”

How terrible, she felt, must be the national experience of which such a Volkslied was the outcome. It sent her to the writings of Turguenieff and Stepniak. Among the papers lies a long cutting, two columns, from the *Times* of February 28, 1890, marked and scored by her hand. It is the shocking story of the brutal ill-treatment of Madame Solnzoff-Kovalsky in the Kara prison in Eastern Siberia,

the flogging of Madame Sihida, by order of Baron Korf, the Governor-General, so that she died two days after from the effects, the suicide by poison of the other female prisoners, and the attempted suicide (successful in two cases), of thirty male prisoners. The ghastly tragedy took place in November 1889. It had appeared in the *Times* early in February and was now fully substantiated. Marie was moved throughout her whole being. The Liberal principles which expressed the whole bent of her nature were set on fire, and it was out of the fulness of her heart that this chord evoked by “la grande et triste symphonie de la terre russe” was sounded from the peace and safety of her English home.

The book was probably written very quickly, bearing as it does all the marks of having been produced at white heat. It appeared only a year after the events which had touched her so profoundly, yet it had time to go through many travels and to be refused at the hands of one publishing firm after another.

Mademoiselle Ixe was of an awkward length; too long to be considered a short story, not so long as the ordinary novel, and for this reason, and also because its author had no

knowledge of how to set her wares before the market, it was long in meeting with a welcome. One of the foremost critics of the day declared in a letter which lies before the present writer that *Mademoiselle Ixe* will not suit anyone he knows. "She is too violent a lady. It is not the style but the substance that goes against it." The very appearance of the manuscript as it travelled from one publisher to another, growing torn and dilapidated, was enough to condemn it.

"And yet," she would say to that sister who was her dearest confidant, "*I feel that it is good,*" and when at last hope had almost vanished, it was not so much the failure of her story that vexed her as the fear that perhaps, after all, her judgment and her perception were radically at fault. "I will send it once more," she said, "and that shall be the last time." It went to Mr. Fisher Unwin; he recognised the intense vitality of its character-drawing, and would not risk injuring it by having it lengthened. He was inspired to create an issue to suit it, the Pseudonym Library, and seldom has a publisher's insight been more amply rewarded. The pseudonym behind which Marie Hawker sheltered herself

was derived from her father's name, Lanoe, while Falconer is of course a paraphrase of the family name.

The appearance of the little volume was awaited by Marie's mother and sister with what the latter can only describe as “deadly anxiety,” for though its success was no surprise to them, it was impossible to answer for the public, and they dreaded the effect on her of the possible failure of what she had said should be her last effort. She herself, always reticent about expressing her feelings in words, said very little of her expectations. She seemed quietly confident, yet the fact that no notes are left of this time of waiting indicates perhaps that she felt the less she thought of it, or said what she thought, even to herself, the better. But success was instant. The reviews were almost unanimous in its favour, but the public seemed even before the reviews. Mr. Gladstone, to whom the little book was given by Mrs. Drew, was one of the first to recognise its merits, and his appreciation, his enthusiastic praise, reported in print helped to call immediate attention to it. Everyone was reading it, asking for it at the libraries, buying it, waiting impatiently while fresh impressions

were being printed. "People on all sides are telling me to read her," writes Lady Camilla Gurdon, "my booksellers delaying till yesterday afternoon to send her to me, because she was out of print. It is so pleasant to think of your book being snatched up and read by everyone as it ought to be. I cannot tell you what a delight your success is to me. . . . The description of my darling Hurstbourne went straight to my heart and gave me a thrill of *Heimweh*."

One of the first letters came from her old friend, Lady Portsmouth :

EGGESFORD, *March 6, 1891.*

MY DEAREST MARIE,—Three lines of very hearty congratulations on the success of your book—Great success. You are in every way worthy of success and I *am* glad you have it. —Affectionately yours,

E. PORTSMOUTH.

Another old friend writes: "It recalls a wonderful letter that you wrote to me when you were a child, of a journey you took. You described so vividly and minutely the incidents that happened that I kept it for *years*."

The welcome accorded to *Mademoiselle Ixe* was received with exultation and delight by Marie's devoted family and with unaffected pleasure and relief by herself, but she was very quiet about her feelings, and her sister, hurrying home from wintering in Egypt to a sick child, found “the distinguished authoress,” as her family began jestingly to call her, besieged by details about new editions, disregarding letters of remonstrance from her publishers on her dilatory attention to their demands, and absorbed in her charge of the ailing baby.

Mrs. Harry Hawker was now able to read the many reviews which she had missed in Egypt, and when she was unable to conceal her emotion over these very gratifying tributes, Marie put her arm round her, saying with a smile, “You see you were right, O my first and firmest supporter.”

Two things she most coveted were granted to her—French and Russian recognition. The letters she received from Mme. Darmesteter, sending her a message from M. Taine, are printed on a later page. The Russian tribute came in a different form: a friend sent her a copy which had been recovered from the

ensor's hands ; page after page was blacked out, and finally the word that showed it was tabooed was scored across the whole volume.

The first money she received from her publishers, an instalment of £10, was forwarded by her to Stepniak for the Russian exiles, and from him and from M. Félix Volkovsky she received warm tributes of gratitude for her advocacy.

“The best short story in the English language”—that is what *Mademoiselle Ixe* has been called. The present writer asked one of the most distinguished of living critics, how far he thought such praise was justified. It was hard to say. He thought of one or two which might be placed before it, but added at last, “at any rate it is a very good second.”

Sir A. Quiller-Couch reviewed it as the work of “a new writer filled with love of her fellow-beings.” He particularly admires the early pages and the pictures of ordinary life, but makes the criticism that the catastrophe does not come into the same plane ; we submit, however, that this is just what this kind of tragedy involves. In one moment all the bright domestic life is shattered by a pistol-shot, and

from the rooted calm of the English household and its trivial gaieties we come face to face with the deep despair of a nation. The only thing we cannot believe is that such a capable, cool-headed person as Mrs. Merrington's Russian governess would not have killed her man.

It is a book one cannot read without a sense of its power and reserved force; so many qualities are shut in so small a space, the humour and pathos never fail to move, however often one reads it. There is not a person who does not help the action; such trifling incidents as the soldier being the one to fly up the stairs, when all the rest of the party stand aghast, and to snatch the smoking pistol from its owner's hand, are carefully studied and significant. What a cipher, what a puppet the young girl of the story would have remained in many hands! But here, Evelyn, with her true, pure, fearless character, deepening under the influence of a sterner nature and an insight into the tragedy of life, convinces us, perhaps more than anything in the book, of its author's creative power.

Yet with all its admirable construction, its masterly disposition of incident, there is no

visible trace of mechanism. Every event is rooted in character and idiosyncrasy. As it happened it seems the most natural thing. "How large and powerful," says one of her reviewers, "is the main conception. The introduction into the order and quiet of long-established English life, of one of those strange and fascinating personalities whom we hear of distantly, as ascending the steps of a Russian scaffold, or enduring the gloom of a Siberian penal settlement—such beings will be more real to us for ever, and yet if Mademoiselle Ixe and her fatal purpose could disappear from the story, the rest could still hold its own; so enjoyable, so full of masterly touches is the drawing of the everyday characters and episodes against which the figure of the heroine is relieved."

The opening scene, in which Mrs. Merrington and the vicar's wife discuss the accomplishments, the nationality, and the religious views of the new governess, has a quiet satiric vein running through it that makes us think of Miss Austen. Mrs. Cosmo Fox, too, the flippant woman of fashion who becomes an unconscious instrument in Mademoiselle Ixe's hands, is drawn to the life. And to the genuine creative

power is added an admirable style, finished, restrained, full of vitality: a style which never challenges attention, but is always adequate.

The fact of the identity of Lanoe Falconer did not dawn upon the neighbourhood for many months, in some cases not for years. It was not till the following year that her name came out, and everyone began to ask her relations how they were connected with the authoress and to express interest and surprise. Her brother used jestingly to complain to her of the tone he encountered: a certain amount of surprise he allowed was natural, even gratifying, but he saw no reason why his acquaintances should be struck almost speechless with astonishment on learning that he had a sister possessed of some talent. “Good Heavens! *your* sister, old man? How extraordinary!” This he thought was going a little too far and he begged Marie to attend to the matter, which she kindly undertook to do.

In the meantime *Mademoiselle Ixe* rushed through one edition after another, and the following are among the letters received by its author:

From Lady Camilla Gurdon

GRUNDISBURGH HALL, WOODBRIDGE.

March 6, 1891.

MY DEAR MARIE,—I think I must tell you what my bookseller said to me in answer to an enquiry as to how *Mademoiselle Ixe* is selling. "By the cartload!" said Mr. Stott. "We sell them as fast as we can get them in. Now tell me about the author; she must be an old hand at it to write so well, so concisely, with such fine touches. Her reputation is made! I know I should be very glad to publish any of her works."

His name is David Stott, in Oxford Street. Do you know him? A publisher and bookseller and a personal friend to his customers—giving excellent advice and sometimes reproof. The Duchess of Cleveland, he said the other day to Beatrice, calls Rudyard Kipling "pretty," but her taste and mine differ and I tell her he's very vulgar. It is curious you should have wondered whether your readers caught your sympathy for Liberals (Russian or otherwise). I gave *Mlle. Ixe* to W.¹ to read and that was the first exclamation he made—"What a good Liberal she

¹ Sir William Brampton Gurdon, M.P.

is ! No one but a good Liberal could have written such a book as this ! ”

What I am longing for you to publish is those charming Hampshire sketches of the old people, that you tell so inimitably.—Ever yours affectionately,

CAMILLA GURDON.

From Mme. Darmesteter to Mr. Fisher Unwin

9, RUE BARA, PARIS.

DEAR MR. UNWIN,—In a literary life there are many pains and few pleasures. Therefore tell Lanoe Falconer that M. Taine—the august himself, to whom I lent her book, finds it extremely interesting and well written—in fact, full of promise.

From the Same

Many thanks, dear Miss Hawker, for your kind little note of which I shall immediately inform my friend, Mme. Pavis—*en effet*, you could not have a better introducer to the best circle of French letters.

I hope that you will one day follow your book to Paris. Any day in December, January, February, March (up till Easter), May and

June, you will find me faithful to my teapot at five o'clock. Need I say how pleased I should be to make your acquaintance and to present you to many persons familiar with *Mademoiselle Ixe* and soon to be acquainted with *Cecilia de Noël*.—Sincerely yours,

MARY DARMESTETER.

From Mrs. Harry Drew

March 24, 1891.

DEAR MISS HAWKER,—Many thanks for the enclosed. How carelessly reviewers dispose of their subjects. . . .

When I was in London the other day, I heard that the person who sympathised with me most strongly in valuing the story was Lady Frances Balfour—married to the Chief Secretary's younger brother. I gave it to the Chief Secretary's secretary, Mr. George Wyndham. He read it when going round the distressed Irish districts and gave it to Mr. Balfour. I thought it might amuse you to hear any little facts about your baby, for it is just like having a baby, having written a book.—Ever yours sincerely,

MARY DREW.

The country home of the Merringtons is drawn in many of its essentials from Hurstbourne Park, but, true to the author's methods of never giving a mere transcript of place or person, the staircase on which the culminating event takes place is that of Rickmansworth Park, a house in Hertfordshire belonging to her friends the Birches, on which still hangs the great piece of tapestry which is mentioned. “It is here,” said Marie to Mrs. Birch, “that I visualised the scene.”

For *Mademoiselle Ixe* Miss Hawker received over £470 in royalties alone.

CHAPTER VIII

“ CECILIA DE NOËL ”

BEFORE *Mademoiselle Ixé* appeared, *Cecilia de Noël*, the book which Marie spoke of as “her own child,” was already in the hands of Messrs. Macmillan, placed there by her friend, Miss Gertrude Ireland Blackburne, who, upon the MS. being shown her by Miss Hawker, exclaimed at once, “This is pure gold.” The head of the house of Macmillan was not behind her in his appreciation. “There is no question,” he writes, “of the talent of the book. Whether the public will recognise it as quickly as it should do, I do not feel certain, but if they fail to do so, it will be their own blame and no fault of the book itself.” The public did not fail, and *Cecilia de Noël* very much enhanced Marie Hawker’s reputation. It was less light, and for its appreciation closer application was needed, but the discussion and interest it aroused were widespread and lasting. It is,

it will be remembered, an account of a few days spent in a country house, haunted by a very terrible ghost which impresses those who see it as being “a lost soul.” It can hardly be called a story, and proves how very much deeper than the wont of ordinary fiction was the trend of the author’s feeling; but though the leading idea is to use a haunted house as the occasion of testing the spiritual value of various kinds of religious creeds, there is no effect of her having gone out of her way to drag abstruse questions of religious theology into a work of imagination. The book tells the impression the ghost made on seven different people. Out of deference to the author’s admirable handling we find ourselves assenting to the ghost. She never attempts to explain it; in fact, we are left in some doubt as to whether there is really any ghost at all, or if the frank unbeliever in the story is right when he asserts that it only appeared to those persons who were expecting to see it. For the interest does not lie in the ghost but in the effect it produces on one after another of the people it visits. With a satire that is always easy, kindly and, in the best sense, urbane—a satire that does not mar, but rather

emphasizes, the tenderness of feeling—you are let into the religious and non-religious conceptions of these characters.

Sir George Atherley, a scientific atheist, opens with a very effective discourse on the creed of science which he believes should satisfy all reasonable desires, on the pitiless precision and accuracy of the natural energies to which alone he subscribes, and on the entire absence of any trace of mercy and love to be discerned in these methods. The young doctor who holds a conversation with him believes in ghosts just as he does in all other symptoms of his patients. He has no hope of escape from the blind destiny from which we suffer here, though if he has had his weak moments, if his conviction has ever wavered, it is when he has come into contact with some beautiful and noble life.

The kind, religious woman holding stern and narrow Evangelical views has long before seen the ghost, and by the look in its eyes has been awakened to a sense of what sin is and of its eternal and unrelenting punishment in the hereafter:

“ And as she spoke the listener had a vision

of the kind that drives men to madness and despair. In its shadow the colour of the flowers was quenched and the music of the birds rang false. Yet it wore the consecration of time and authority. What if it were true? But as he quailed before that spectre a little child's hand was placed in his. ‘By that little human touch the spell was broken, and looking into the child's eyes, I felt it was a lie.’”

Canon Vernade, the impressive, prosperous dignitary, so self-confident, so rightly self-confident, is an equally convincing creation. His brilliant, eloquent sermon, delivered in a voice of wide compass whose varying tones he used with the skill of a practised orator, and his repudiation of the preposterous persons who can believe in ghosts after the Education Act has been in force all these years, are particularly impressive to his more commonplace hearers.

Then there is the High Church priest, full of belief in the supernatural, holding as a revelation of the Church the eternal separation from the Divine Being of those who have failed to secure salvation while on earth, looking for a Lawgiver and a Judge.

And last comes the fine lady with her new and spiritual religion, the latest of a long line of creeds by which she has been caught from time to time, the peculiar advantage of which is that it has "nothing to do with God." Under it people develop powers that are really marvellous. They can "see into another world as plainly as you can see this drawing-room and talk as easily with spirits as I am talking to you." And so you get Atherley's gospel and Mrs. Mostyn's gospel, and Canon Verdane's gospel and the rest. The scientist, the sceptic, the evangelical, the sleek, self-confident cleric, the ascetic young ritualist—the ghost tries the mettle of all these in turn, and all in turn have their complacency shaken, their rags torn from them, their dread of the unseen emphasized. The fashionable, godless gospel of the fine lady faddist fails her under the test, yet no one, neither priest, nor layman, nor woman, is inspired with any spark of pity for a kindred spirit doomed to everlasting woe. In each case the visionary only thinks of his or her own soul and of guarding or rescuing it.

After all, in their degree and in their characteristics, fashions have undergone the experience, we learn from Cecilia what the author

believes the gospel should teach us. The whole attitude is changed. What, she thinks, if the poor spirit came longing for help and forgiveness? How dreadful, then, that other beings should turn from it instead of going to meet and comfort it. Her story is told in a way that is at once powerful and pathetic:

“When I said my prayers I asked especially that, if it should appear to me, I might have strength to forget all selfish fear and try only to know what it wanted. And as I prayed the foolish shrinking dread we have of such things seemed to fade away, and after that came to me that lovely feeling which we all have sometimes . . . as if one’s heart were beating and overflowing with love towards everything in this world and in all the worlds; as if the very grasses and stones were dear, but dearest of all, the creatures that still suffer. . . . And as if this were something not our own, but part of that wonderful Love above us, about us, everywhere, clasping us all so tenderly and safely. . . .

“It was so sweet that I knelt on, drinking it in for a long time; not praying, you know, but just resting and feeling as if I were in heaven, till all at once, I cannot explain why,

I moved and looked round. It was there at the other end of the room. It was . . . much worse than I dreaded it would be ; as if it looked out of some great horror, deeper than I could understand. I was afraid—so much afraid. I only wanted to get out of sight of it. And I think I would have gone, but it stretched out its hands to me as if it were asking for something, and then of course I could not go. So, though I was trembling a little, I went nearer and looked in its face. And after that I was not afraid any more. I was too sorry for it ; its poor eyes were so full of anguish.”

Cecilia, whose character is really finely sketched, succeeds in dissipating the awful spiritual loneliness of the sinner who had broken the bond between himself and all other creatures and restoring the being of her vision to the hope of a higher life. “If the last chapter does not take the reader by the throat,” says one of the reviewers, “I am inclined to pity him.” Here is the end of the vision :

“I said, ‘Why did you not turn for help to God?’ Then it gave a terrible answer: it said, ‘What is God?’ And when I heard

these words there came over me a wild kind of pity, such as I used to feel when I saw my little child struggling for breath when he was ill, and I held out my arms to this poor lonely thing, but it shrank back, crying :

“ ‘ Speak to me, but do not touch me. I am all death, and if you come too near me the death in me may kill the life in you.’ ”

“ But I said, ‘ No, Death cannot kill the life in me, even though it kill my body. Dear fellow-spirit, I cannot tell you what I know ; but let me take you in my arms ; rest for an instant on my heart, and perhaps I may make you feel what I feel all around us.’ ”

“ And as I spoke I threw my arms around the shadowy form and strained it to my heart. And I felt as if I were pressing to me only air, but air colder than any ice, so that my heart seemed to stop beating, and I could hardly breathe. But I still clasped it closer and closer, and as I grew colder it seemed to grow less chill.

“ And at last it spoke again, and the whisper was not far away but near. It said :

“ ‘ It is enough ; now I know what God is ! ’ ”

Even Atherley, though he declares justly enough that it is even easier to explain Cecilia’s

vision as a dream than any of the former apparitions, is represented as profoundly impressed by the spiritual courage and depth of her nature and the mere fact of the existence of such a nature.

“An almost flawless gem,” the editor of the *New Review* (Archibald Grove) writes to the author. “Perfect alike in conception and realisation. I have rarely read anything in which the sentiment is so deep and true without being mawkish. It is welling over with the best spirit of the age!” “You have not written a ghost story,” writes a friend, “but a story which is a ghost in itself. Not the actions of men and women, but their spirits moving about in worlds not realised, form the theme, and one can trace the ignorance, incredulity, awe, and hope with which they severally turn to the unseen.” “Mr. H. was here last night,” writes Lady Camilla. “He had been reading *Cecilia*, and he said, ‘That book has been a baptism to me.’ I told him of your having said it contained your gospel, and was the message you had to give to the world, and he said, ‘Yes; the book is just that—a message to the world.’”

Among the few letters of her own that have

been preserved are two to her cousin, Mr. Henry Houndle, in which she explains her own idea in writing *Cecilia de Noël*:

“I hope you will like *Cecilia de Noël*,” she writes on September 1, 1891, “which comes out in October.

“It is *peculiar*. An allegory as well as a story, and is an attempt to express my conviction that in the goodness of human beings, especially of some exquisite characters, we possess a revelation which scientific criticism cannot account for or explain away. The motto from Browning on the title-page also in part explains my ‘drift.’”¹

She fancied the letter had miscarried and, later in the month she writes again:

HURSTBOURNE PRIORS,
September 29, 1891.

DEAR HENRY,—Since my letter did not reach you, I must repeat what I said therein concerning my next book, almost immediately coming out—*Cecilia de Noël*.

¹ “Through such souls above,
God, stooping, shows sufficient of His Light
For us i’ the dark to rise by.”

—*The Ring and the Book*.

As it is very "odd" and *may*, if it takes, arouse much speculation, I should like to explain to you that its chief import is this—that the only revelation which science cannot explain away is the revelation of goodness in the human character. The ghost which represents the sinner *may* have no existence save in the imagination of those who saw it. I state both sides, leaving the question open, because I think it is of no consequence whether there are or have been such things as miracles or no. As to "Cecilia de Noël"—though she is a purely imaginary character and I have never met anyone exactly like her, I have met many near relations of hers, with a strong family likeness to her, your mother amongst others.

Mrs. Molyneux's description of Cecilia applies to her, especially the words—"Cecilia's pity is so reverent, so pure. No suffering could ever be disgusting or shocking to Cecilia. . . . The more humiliating it was, the more pitiful it would be to her!—Your affectionate coz, MARIE."

Mr. R. H. Hutton (is he the Mr. H. mentioned above?) reviewed the book in the *Spectator*—a review which gratified Marie extremely. He finds fault with her, however, in that she

does not sufficiently realise that the highest and purest kind of love is potent to repel as well as to attract, and that those whom it repels may harden themselves, till the attitude of defiance constitutes an impassable gulf. The author would probably have rejoined that this was the attitude and the result which she intended, but it was bridged by the self-forgetfulness and love of a being whose life was modelled on the one perfect life ever given to the world. Principal Tulloch wrote to tell her that he had embodied her beautiful story in a sermon which he preached to a large congregation in Glasgow. Canon Ainger and other preachers took it as a book to be thought over, illustrating how all revelation is a manifestation of Personality—the veiled truth; that in love, spirit speaks to spirit, man speaks to man; but how account for that love in man? How account for that other Love that is able to speak to and to relieve the sorrow of the world? The following letter from the author of *John Inglesant* is among her papers:

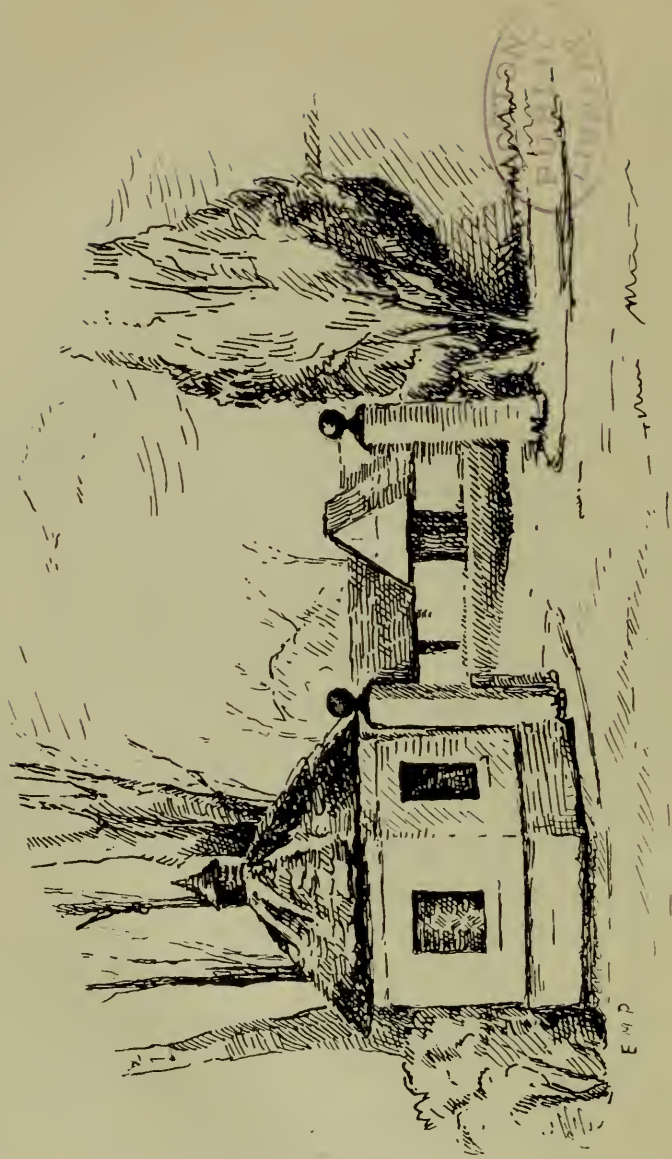
DEANERY, SALISBURY,
May 14, 1892.

MY DEAR MADAM,—Your most gratifying and interesting letter was forwarded to me in

London. I had no time to think of and answer it there, and even now I can do no more, I fear, than acknowledge it, but I do not like to wait longer before sending you a few lines of thanks.

I am staying here over the Sunday and wish at any rate to begin a letter to you from here, as there seems a certain appropriateness in a message of peace and welcome dated from so exquisite a spot, the most perfect perhaps of all the stately and solemn homes of the English Church. As I sat in the cathedral this morning my mind was full of the consoling certainty that the veil that separates Free Thought and Revelation is of the thinnest possible texture and would vanish utterly away but for the miserable faculty we have of misunderstanding each other and of that still more appalling determination so common among so-called religious people that, having received the unspeakable gift themselves, God shall not manifest himself to any other man in any other way.

I think Faith cannot be defined as anything belonging to mere *assent* in a *dogma* or submission to authority—Faith *must* relate to *Idea*. This is the ideal truth which underlies the dogma, which gives it its power and vitality. Two conclusions seem to me to



ENTRANCE TO THE HAUNTED HOUSE

follow from the statement. First, it is a certain fact that in all history the source of *Faith* (so defined) is *Free Thought*. This was most strikingly the case in the history of the *Founder* of Christianity. Second, there is not a single dogma of Christianity, however strange and wild it may appear, but has some germ and basis of true Idea. Take Eternal Punishment, for instance, as perhaps the most extreme. This seems nothing but a somewhat popular way of stating the undoubted fact of the pitiless sequence of conditional existence. Take the Trinity again : as I said some time ago in the *Spectator*, the Christian doctrine of the co-existence of the Eternal Son, seemingly so strange, is nothing but the Platonic doctrine of the Idea of Personality existing in the mind of God. Professor Westcott will, I think, agree with this.

Then with regard to your own beautiful words and pleading for the sympathy of Humanity, we must remember who it was who said, “This is the first and great commandment—to love God, and the second is like unto : to love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law of the Universe and all the Insight of the Seers.”

And the Same who said this was the first who, in the whole world’s history, *reclaimed*

by kindness “a woman who was a sinner.” Is there no allegiance due in this day of conflicting voices to such a teacher as this?

Have you seen in the current number of the *Church Quarterly* an article on “John Ingle-sant?” It is not interesting only as relating to that book, but as (from a distinctly Church point of view) recognising the fact that the Sacrament is greater than the creeds, and for the hope it expresses in the Sacrament as a “daysman” and peacemaker.

I am going up to Keble College at the end of this week. I hope to see the author and will show him your letter.—Believe me to be very grateful for your letter and to be, Madam, Yours very sincerely,

J. HENRY SHORTHOUSE.

P.S.—Your signature suggests another bond of union. My mother was a Hawker of the Somersetshire people. The same family, I believe, as the Rector of Charles, Plymouth, and the late Vicar of Morwenstow, his grandson. I am considered to inherit her characteristics to some extent.¹

Many other letters reached her, some of

¹ The Vicar of Morwenstow was a distant connection of the Hampshire Hawkers.

which are given in a later chapter. Cecilia herself is a picture thrown out by contrast with the other sharply outlined personalities which are hardly less impressive. The children are delightful, amusing, and yet absolutely natural. Above all, the deep and touching sentiment, the speculative discussions which form the basis of the book are lit up and relieved by the humour which plays all through it. Mr. Hutton, in speaking of this, says that it gives a fascination to her slightest touches. It is a humour which is almost too elusive for quotation. It belongs to the writer's individuality, to her sense of the pathetic in life, and stands the true test of all humour: that it shall enlarge our sympathies, not narrow them. It has nothing in it of “the poison of mischievous contempt,” nothing of that jocular criticism of human nature, with no heart in it, which is so commonly served up to us.

Miss Hawker's personages have nothing to say in epigrams; they are not the sort of people who know themselves to be amusing and have to live up to a reputation for saying smart things, nor are they observed and described with a temper verging on the spiteful—perhaps the commonest quality in woman's

wit. She does not single out the old maid or the curate and make butts of them, she relies on no salient peculiarities or striking absurdities. Her humour is of the nature of Charles Lamb's or Jane Austen's. It plays all through her work just as it played all through her life, lambent, unforced, inevitable. Her work represents everyday people as seen by a humorously attentive eye, and it has all the breadth and geniality characteristic of the true brand of this rare quality. Charming, prosaic Lady Atherley, quite unmoved by an account of the dangerous ritualistic tendencies of the new High Church curate and only alive to the probability of his being an Austyn of Temple Leigh, in which case he ought to be asked to dinner, or placidly looking up from her knitting to beg a high-flown guest to defer her strictures on the Christian faith because the servants are just bringing in coffee and "might think it odd," is near akin to Lady Bertram, with her "do not act anything improper, my dears, Sir Thomas would not like it." Atherley himself, "a man's man" as he has been called, is an example, absolutely true to life, of the intellectual character whose sense of humour enables him to bear philosophically with and

even to enjoy the sweet, matter-of-fact nature with which he is in daily contact. His slight chaffing of his wife, who fortunately for their domestic peace does not suspect him, never becomes ill-bred and is indicated with commendable restraint.

The scene of the book is laid round Hurstbourne Priors. A couple of miles beyond Longparish stands the old house to which she gives the name of Weald Manor. Deserted and damp as it then was, one could readily imagine a ghost looking over one's shoulder. “I have often sat with her on the Beggar's stile,” says a cousin, “and looked across the river and to the village beyond ; just as she describes it.”

CHAPTER IX

“ THE HÔTEL D’ANGLETERRE ”

VERY few of Marie Hawker’s own letters have been preserved. The longest is one written to Mrs. Harry Drew, soon after the publication of *Mademoiselle Ixe*, in which she pays full tribute to the share which Mr. Gladstone’s recommendation had had in promoting the success of her little book ; a success it must be recollected of a quite untried author, in no way known to the public. In the same letter she gives some interesting details of her methods of work :

To Mrs. Harry Drew

31 UPPER BAKER STREET, LONDON,
February 20, 1891.

DEAR MRS. DREW,—Your letter has followed me to London where I am paying a short and busy visit or I would have answered it sooner.

I enclose all the Reviews that have reached me except your own and one which followed

in the *D.T.* and which, being in a leading article, called still more attention to the book.

Perhaps you saw it. It said Mr. Gladstone was the nearest approach to the literary patron we have in this age. I believe it, and it seems to me a good thing that it is so for more than me especially. I am glad to think other good judges (including Taine, the French critic) had commended *Mlle. Ixe*, but I firmly believe it would never have been popular but for your kind intervention and the magic of Mr. Gladstone’s name.

In answer to your question, I drew no *single* character from life—consciously at least; but taken *en masse* the people were copied from those one meets in a country neighbourhood. *Mlle. Ixe* herself was purely imaginary—evolved after reading Turgenieff, Stepniak, and other Russian writers or writers upon Russia.

Her peculiar way of speaking was due to the fact that I always thought of her as speaking her most important speeches *in French* and translated them.

Yes, indeed, music is a great joy and stimulus to me. It is chiefly to hear some that I have now come up to London.

I have not written anything but slight sketchy stories, not having been much encouraged by *Mlle. Ixe’s* reception!! Besides,

my health, which has not been very good, has interfered a good deal with my work.

I am now trying to finish a ghost story which in its incomplete form has been pronounced original. Unfortunately I have never learned to command the spirit of composition and cannot write on methodically like some people.

With many thanks for your sympathy as well as for your help,—I remain, yours sincerely,
M. E. HAWKER.

A letter was received from Mrs. Drew on the appearance of *Cecilia de Noël* :

HAWARDEN CASTLE,
October 13, 1891.

DEAR MISS HAWKER,—Thank you very much for sending me *Cecilia*. I should always wish to read everything you write. You won't mind my saying I do not care for it as much as I do for *Mlle. Ixe*. I think much of the talk very clever and good except perhaps the servants. It is perhaps a peculiarity of mine to think it unnatural when servants are made to add or leave out all the h's and talk very vulgar English, because I think servants nowadays talk just as we do. The difficulty is *Cecilia*. She is so led up to : the longing to meet her is so well maintained that when she

comes she rather falls short. But I love the idea, though I am always prejudiced badly when it's a ghost story. You will forgive me, I trust. The “Violin Obligato” I think perfect. Have you read *Seven Dreamers*, by Glosson (American)? Lovely, brimming with humour and pathos and so original.

How sad Lord Portsmouth's death.—Yours
very truly, MARY DREW.

I shall much hope to see by the Reviews that I undervalue *Cecilia*.

Some Emotions and a Moral has a very clever sentence or two, but is bad, don't you think? ¹

In her answer dated October 17, 1891, Marie take her friend's strictures in very good part, and goes on :

“I agree with you that *Emotions* is not altogether satisfactory, but it is cleverly written. My mother says it has an Ibsenite atmosphere about it. . . . It pleases me to hear that anyone who is fastidious is interested in my stories—as readers in general, including

¹ This novel by Mrs. Craigie (“John Oliver Hobbes”) had just appeared in the Pseudonym Library, which finally ran to sixty-five volumes.

the critics, appear to be anything but fastidious.

“ I am afraid that journalism is not favourable to literature.”

The letters which Miss Hawker received from literary people are not many, but they are full of serious purpose and show how much thought had been aroused by her writing among those whose thoughts were worth hearing:

From Mr. Fisher Unwin

What do you call your new book, a novel or a story? It is different from most works of fiction. You seem to have created a new form in literature. I have tried to make up my mind which of your books, if I had to choose, I would prefer to publish—*Ixe* or *Cecilia*—and I am still in doubt. But I am certain it was wise to publish *Ixe* first. . . . To me your strong point is your vivid photographic pictures of society and characters. They come out so clearly, one knows them, and the readers must feel they are human beings and not creatures of fancy.

I like *Cecilia*, not perhaps because it is

the better book or better art, but that I am always attracted by works that discuss religious and controversial questions.

From Canon Ainger

THE GLADE, BRANCH HILL, HAMPSTEAD,
December 1891.

DEAR MISS HAWKER,—It was a great pleasure (and surprise) to me to get your kind letter.

Sunday afternoon was quite exceptionally wet and dreary and our ordinary congregation was reduced by at least one half in consequence, and I little thought that there would be any bird of the air to carry the matter on that occasion. I was preaching about the Pharisees and Sadducees who flocked to John the Baptist, and I said that some went doubtless out of idle curiosity, but others in abject terror because they had heard that he seemed to speak of some terrible judgment coming upon the earth. I added that this was perfectly true to nature; for that men of the world and even advanced thinkers (like the Sadducees) were never so panic-stricken as at the thought of coming into direct, personal contact with the world of *spirits*; and I added how admirably this had been illustrated in a recent story. I confess I *hoped* my allusion

might awaken curiosity and interest in the book, though I little thought that a watchful friend of the author was below me.

But if you will allow me to say so, you quite misinterpret my own conception of your "poor Canon" as you call him, and I demur utterly to the reply you made to the young girl whom you quote as having asked whether Canon Vernade was not "a very wicked man." In such a reply as "No! we are all just as bad" lies, I humbly think, no virtue: because no real truth. I know only too well how inconsistent I am; how every Sunday I preach theories and standards of virtue and holiness which put my own self to utter and miserable shame. I know that I break my own rules and counsels a dozen times on my way home from church in thought and in word, and yet (though you will only, I fear, scorn me as another dupe) I *do* thank God that I am not as Canon Vernade: because he was a charlatan (as you have admirably drawn him) and *was not sorry for it* and did not struggle against it, and had in him no elements (as I understand the character) of growth or pledge of any final deliverance from his unreality. Whereas there are thousands—tens of thousands—of men and women, thank God, in the world who know themselves to be inconsistent,

believing one thing and too often doing the opposite, yet who are *living*, because fighting against it; and because they,

“Rowing hard against the stream,
See distant gates of Eden gleam,
And never dream it is a dream.”

To teach that we are all bad together, and that all pretence of being good is a fond delusion, is (I fear I must say it) to wield a terribly deadly weapon, not to help the world on to better things. I so truly admire your books for the fine and rare quality they show—their humour (as delicate as it is rare), their style and their character-drawing, that I deeply lament a certain tone which to me at least leaves a certain bad taste in the mouth when I have finished them.

Can you once more forgive me for this plain speaking? You will be translating my motto, “Prepare for a sermon,” as Lamb translated Coleridge’s.—Yours very sincerely,

ALFRED AINGER.

From the Same

December 21, 1891.

DEAR MISS HAWKER—Accept my best thanks for your full and kind reply to my (I fear)

rather unguarded and ill-worded comments on your books.

I am afraid you still misunderstand some of these, you still speak of your having "failed" in the character of Canon Vernade to make your point and meaning clear. I confess I think you have perfectly succeeded. To my mind he is one of the most consistent characters in the book and the most vigorously drawn. But when I demurred to your theory that we were all like him (and therefore, I submit, all worldly and heartless), I was only referring to your reply to your young friend who asked if he was not a "very bad man." I must submit that if we all preached unselfishness and generosity and yet sneered at our friends who did not "play their cards well" and who married for love instead of for money—we should be *all* worldly and heartless, and that a world of such people would inevitably fall to pieces in a generation or two from very rottenness. On your own admission, your answer to your young friend would be only just if you added, "We are all like him, except those of us who are *not*," and this modification just makes the whole difference between us. I cannot agree with you that *one* Cecilia de Noël here and there marks the proportion of sincerity and goodness in the world.

I ought not to have said “leaves a *bad taste*,” for it is far too strong a phrase and I hasten to apologise and to explain.

But I do mean that there is to me a certain tone, more *felt* than definable, in your books, of a patronising view as regards the influence of Christianity in the world—or a kind of pitying toleration of it, as if there was somewhere a much better substitute for it, if people would but think so : and as if noble characters here and there might be indefinitely multiplied *without it*. Most assuredly I should not call your writings what you say the *Guardian* called them, but I suppose the reviewer must have meant that he felt a *soupçon* of the quality that strikes me as rather sad and rather hopeless. Do you *really* think that if the Gospel of Christ were “swept away,” characters like your Cecilia de Noël would still remain and re-evangelise the world ? If that Sun were to set, certain recollections of it *would* survive, I doubt not, for a while, and light our steps :

“ The mournful light
That broods above the fallen Sun,
And dwells in heaven half the night.”

But how about the second half of that night ? It must be surely a *living* Christ that can

alone preserve a world in soundness and in vitality !

I very seldom, dear Miss Hawker, write these professional letters, but you seem to me to have such unfulfilled possibilities of helping the world by your writings that I venture thus to be so bold as to comment on a vein of cynicism that seems to me to endanger the good you might otherwise do. Once more forgive me.

May the Christmas season remind us of *all* we owe to it.—Yours very sincerely,

ALFRED AINGER.

It is evident that Marie in her broad and humorous toleration could not look upon Canon Vernade's shortcomings as seriously as did her correspondent. She saw him as the ordinary well-meaning person, whose perceptions were dulled and blinded by a long environment, ministering to his complacency and self-sufficiency. When she said "we are all as bad," she meant we should all be liable under the same circumstances to develop the same idiosyncrasies.

The vein of cynicism on which Canon Ainger comments is discernible at this time. It is

interesting to notice how entirely it disappears in after life, as her religious faith fills her whole being :

From a Friend

November 5, 1891.

You will get tired of hearing from me after every book of yours, but it is quite impossible to read such a book as *Cecilia de Noël* without thanking you for it from my heart. I don't know what the world is saying of it, as I have been cut off from it by trouble for some weeks, but I know what the book has been to my own soul—a veritable oasis in the desert, a fountain of refreshment and healing.”

From the Same

February 21, 1902.

Ever since last Sunday I have been wanting to write to you. I often go to Mr. Prebendary Eyton's church in Sloane Street. You may know of him as a prominent Broad Churchman and an interesting and suggestive preacher. Last Sunday he was preaching on “Which is the greatest commandment.” Pointing out that more stress was laid nowadays on the supplementary command, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” he added, “It

is in the human that men now seek the Divine. They find their best revelation of God in a Cecilia de Noël." The preacher himself was not entirely at one with this tendency. Perhaps he could define (though he did *not* on Sunday) what it means to love God with heart and soul and strength, except as mirrored in the "holy human ghost." Anyhow I thought you might like to hear how, before an immense congregation—much of the intellectual as well as social élite—he referred to your work as typical of a phase of the Zeitgeist.

From Mr. Andrew Lang

1 MARLOES ROAD,
October 9, 1891.

DEAR MADAM,—I only chanced to open a parcel to-day containing *Cecilia* and have not yet read her, but I have heard her praises. Is not this she that —— rejected? They were always dull people.¹

As to Scott's ghost on whom I opened, I am not so sure he believed his own explanations, and he saw another ghost, which he could not explain. It is not in Lockhart.—Sincerely yours,
A. LANG.

¹ This stricture is amusing, as it was Mr. Andrew Lang who refused *Mademoiselle Ixe*, when acting as reader for Messrs. Arrow-smith, on the plea that she was "too violent a lady."

From the Same

November 2.

DEAR MADAM,—Sir Walter's ghost he met as he was riding down the hill to Ashestiell before dinner. It was a tall figure in brown with a long staff, on a bare hillside. When he was within “a few yards” of it, it “vanished.” He rode on, not looking back he saw it, he saw it again and rode up to it, *Même jeu*. Then neither he nor the mare, Fenella, wanted to wait any longer.

He heard also very sufficient rappings at Abbotsford when Bullock died in London. You will find this in Lockhart in the index under Bullock. Skene of Rubislaw saw Sir Walter's own ghost in 1864—“he came from a long distance.”

I read *Cecilia* with much interest, but I am not sure she was not better before she got lost in theological discussion.

This is apparently the taste of the period, however, she is very nice, if a little like

“The Bandicoot, the Bandicoot,
That wildly sympathetic brute.”

as an old writer says.—Sincerely yours,

A. LANG.

A short story, "Moonie," was written in 1892 for *Good Words*, and its proposal and discussion brought her several letters from Dr. Donald Macleod, the editor of the magazine :

"I say most sincerely," he writes, "that there is scarcely a new writer whose works have impressed me more as bits of art, combining high aims, power, and finish, than yours have done. I am most anxious to have your help and to see you in our pages.

.

"I am sorry you speak of your own 'little health.' Never let me put it to a strain, but work if not excessive, is healthful—is it not ?

"As to Louis Stevenson and his 'brownies,' there is a certain truth in it, but it has another side. In moments of real inspiration, when one feels it is *given them* to say something, work is delightful and the 'brownies' are delicious companions. But it is extraordinary how often instead of being our masters, we may make them our servants—by sitting down and with a pen compelling them to give aid.

"I am often—to compare small things with great—at the end of a week without an idea, almost without a conviction and with two sermons to preach : anxious, God knows ! to

have something to say to my people and for Him, and when I feel as dry as summer dust, I am tempted to say ‘No use, must wait for the afflatus—must take an old sermon this time.’ But it is extraordinary how, when the temptation is resisted and I sit doggedly down, something is given, which ends in great thankfulness. You remember Anthony Trollope’s definition of Genius. He was just too mechanical. Where is *via media* ? ”

Readers who have made acquaintance in the pages of *Cecilia de Noël* with Mrs. Martell, the cook who sees the ghost, will be happy to extend their acquaintance with that entertaining if ungrammatical person. She made some conquests among Marie Hawker’s readers, of which she had reason to be proud, but by Mrs. Drew, as we have seen, and others she was pronounced to be overdrawn and a caricature. We are assured, however, that she is the only character taken from life and that she is almost slavishly faithful to the original. Her manner of speaking and expressing herself was, no doubt, more common thirty-five years ago than in these more educated days, and surely nobody except nature could have in-

vented Mrs. Martell, unless it were Dickens, to whose unfashionable and broadly humorous world she seems to belong. Miss Hawker's notebooks abound in recollections of her, and we can divine which were those pithy expressions which the Hawker family joyfully adopted. "So low!" or "None of your flash words for me" are denunciations which must have been used with telling effect.

We have here quite a biography of this eminent retainer :

Mrs. Mallet, to give her real name, was not a native of the valley but on the ebb-tide of fortune had drifted thither from a neighbouring seaport after the death of her husband, a pensioner in the army, and as she herself described him, in the stately terms she affected, "an old warrior!" The old warrior's pension died with him, an arrangement naturally displeasing to his relict. "It is my opinion," she would candidly observe, "that every female relation of a soldier should 'ave a pension." This being very far from the hard fact, Mrs. Mallet was compelled to augment, if not entirely to supply an income, by turning her versatile hand to anything. In this manner did she enter upon the scene in colours

that afterwards proved disastrously false—being imported by two young persons struggling to make both ends of small allowances meet, as a visiting dressmaker, and contriving speedily to convey them to the verge of bankruptcy. Yet even despair was mitigated by wiles that would have made her young victims smile upon the scaffold. She held them spell-bound by stories the local colouring of which was as rare as the descriptive powers of the teller. With an eye for the essential and a picturesque touch she would open out scenes of the humour of which she herself remained wholly unconscious; scenes from spheres for ever closed to her hearers by the stern laws of social divisions. How many of these little Kodaks still linger in their memory and enrich with quotations their family vocabulary!

Among them is the charming tale of Mr. Thomas Bunn who brutally refused to rise to that station to which the fortune of more genteel relatives beckoned him. What Mr. Thomas Bunn’s actual calling was, besides that of going to market and getting drunk, was never made clear, but the marriage of his only sister to a neighbouring tradesman was a distinguished social step which should have put all the rest of the family on their mettle. Mr. Thomas Bunn, on the contrary,

from first to last maintained a style of dialect and demeanour which in his sister's extremely genteel household gave him the air of a bull among a covey of partridges.

Mrs. Mallet would imitate her sister's mincing voice. "Law, Thomas," she would say (not inexcusably) when he was eating straight from the joint before him, "Won't you have some cut and put upon a plate?" "Naw," the incorrigible Thomas would reply, with his mouth full, "I don't want no plate. I'll take just what I wants, as I've a mind to."

"So low!" as Mrs. Mallet would interpolate with a shudder. "When his small nephews come home so genteel from boarding-school, Mr. Bunn in his low way said to 'em at dinner, 'Wull 'e 'ave some more to eat, Bill?' and the little boy 'e answered so polite, 'No, uncle, thank you. I've 'ad sufficient.' 'None of your flash words for me,' says his uncle."

Listening to these and other more idyllic tales in which Mrs. Mallet played leading parts as beauty, bride, and matron, one forgot to count the yards of stitching or to criticise too closely the erratic course of her scissors. Even the shock of "trying on" was mitigated by original forms of consolation. "Beautiful at the back!" was the invariable exclamation when

the more visible front was obviously in fault, while for blunders even more glaring she had an unfailing panacea, “a careless bow,” a phrase she pronounced with such unction of look and manner as to suggest the *ne plus ultra* of artistic negligence. For Mrs. Mallet was not without artistic leanings of a bold and daring kind; but because of the degenerate taste of a generation nourished on half-tones, her desire to see one of the family in “a black trimmed with h’orange,” and another in a white piqué piped with scarlet cord, remained unfulfilled. The actual as well as the ideal appeared to be transcended in her design for a bonnet trimmed all round with “little beadles,” a word not to be accepted in its apparent sense, but as a term invented by Mrs. Mallet to indicate something between a bugle and a bead.

Luck depriving the household of a cook, Mrs. Mallet graciously accepted the post with that cheerful readiness to undertake any responsibility, however unfamiliar, which is one of the secrets of success in life. Mrs. Mallet proved to be almost all that could be wished in this new capacity. She could prepare plain fare palatably, she was honest and reliable, and her extreme dignity of demeanour inspired a wholesome awe in the younger ser-

vants. She always spoke of the tiny fishing cottage as "the mansion" and of its unpretending household as "the establishment." Her ideal was steadiness and gentility. "'H'Ann,' I says, 'come in this minute. I'm ashamed of you, laughing and talking like that with the workmen. Its so low,'" pronounced with an accent that should have impressed the dullest imagination. Her exhortations to this handmaid in particular afforded ample justification for what purists may consider her mismanagement of the letter "h"; it produced a startling effect, like the report of a pistol.

It was an inevitable part of gentility as understood by Mrs. Mallet that she should be exquisitely timid on every possible occasion, whether of a material or spiritual nature. It would be difficult to say whether ghosts or burglars most disturbed her delicate nerves. She was evidently of that temperament, better understood and appreciated in these days, which has a special attraction for spooks of all kinds. Her attic and the stairs approaching it became during her stay the scene of many strange manifestations.

Mr. Fisher Unwin soon brought out *The Hôtel d'Angleterre and Other Stories*, a col-

lection which well maintained the writer’s reputation. It is impossible to conceive anything slighter. Mr. R. H. Hutton, in reviewing these, says that the five sketches in the tiny volume are hardly to be called stories, but that they have a delicacy and finish that make them unique of their kind. Let no one fancy, he adds, that it is easy to produce such sketches; “as easy to produce a humming-bird’s feather, a butterfly’s wing, a wren’s egg.”

The distinct impression is produced out of materials so destitute of strong outlines, that many a writer, who would feel capable of interesting us in an exciting plot, would abandon this more delicate task in despair. But it is the natural genius of the author to paint on a cobweb and to paint with so much delicacy and precision that the scene which flashes for a moment before the mind’s eye is more telling than an effective plot. A scene or two at the great Riviera hotel gives the contrast between the brilliant and peremptory beauty who impresses her will on her mother and sister and most of her acquaintances, and the shrinking sensitive little foil who is so intent on effacing herself that she manages to strike the imagination of a man

weary of egotism and the commonplaces of society. Equally lightly sketched is the dreamy child in the "Violin Obligato" (which some people think the best thing she ever wrote), whose soul goes forth in musical idealism, and who reads her own intensity of passion into the love affair of the superficial couple brought together by circumstance and mutual excitement, till she is almost shocked to death by the discovery that what had seemed so noble and elevated a feeling is short-lived and devoid of roots. Again a few touches and the contrast is drawn between the interest of the fussy, punctilious old gentleman in the special umbrella which his light-minded niece had lost and the other eager girl's feverish terror lest the rainy day for her should mean the loss of the last opportunity of learning the feelings she had inspired in the man who had touched her heart.

In every case, with the slightest excuse, some rare effect is produced by exquisitely light touches which portray the overruling feeling on the one side and the background of unpropitious circumstances on the other.

The author has the art of introducing some very prosaic element into the picture. A

valetudinarian old lady wrapped up in precautions and the desire for “ozone,” an impatient domestic tyrant, or some conventional woman, like Mrs. Graham in the “Violin Obligato,” who takes for granted that there is nothing ideal in the impulses of the human heart and is always pressing her prosaic sagacities on the imagination of the young, and then against these commonplace subjects she dashes in the ardent and restless cravings of some passionate nature with a freshness and vividness of portraiture conveyed with as few strokes as possible, but with every stroke telling. There is no comment or reflection, and the picture is left to produce its own impression. The description of the little violin-player is clear and vivid. It was as if she had discovered in the music and now disclosed to others an alternate pathos and triumph which nobody had suspected. The singers, both of sensitive temperaments, answered to her touch; they sang as they had never sung before, “till at the close . . . with the voice of the violin soaring and quivering above them the effect was such that Mrs. Vane, as she afterwards explained, ‘felt a cold shiver run down her back.’”

“My dear Sylvia,” she then exclaimed, “that is exquisite ! The addition of the violin is the very greatest improvement, is it not, dear Mrs. Graham ? ”

“Yes,” said the plump matron at the piano, looking kindly round on the performers, all slightly flushed with the consciousness of success. “It is always a good plan to have more than one instrument to accompany amateurs, as it all helps to hide when they sing out of tune.”

With so few strokes she makes you feel the contrast between the prose of life and its poetry, between that disposition to fuss and potter about the passing incident which makes human life feel so narrow and wearisome, and the eager emotion which, while it lasts in the hearts in which it wells up, lifts life high above the level of trifles and immaterial details, into a vision where we seem to have something like a true insight into the significance of things eternal. It is the very slightest work, but it is fine art, exquisite of its kind in truth and tenderness.

CHAPTER X

ECHOES OF "MLLE. IXE"

1891-1892

MARIE Hawker's notes at this time are less concerned with the success of her book or with praise bestowed upon it, than with those strictures and unconsciously humorous comments which struck her whimsical sense of the absurd.

When favourable reviews appeared of a short story, she asked her sister if she thought the story was admired because it was good, or because it was written by the author of *Mademoiselle Ixe*—but added philosophically, "It is impossible to say, and after all it is no good being jealous of oneself."

Her stepfather amused her by composing letters on her behalf to her publishers: "Little delicate letters," asking to see the accounts. "May I ask you out of mere curiosity," &c. (with a little laugh which it would be difficult to express in writing).

Stepniak expressed the greatest admiration for her talent and for the services she had rendered to the cause of revolutionary Russia, and Volkovsky wrote to her that *Mademoiselle Ixe* might have been the work of a Russian Liberal but for the governess's speech to Evelyn about Parry's beautiful place, which he construed into a wish to induce Evelyn to accept him; a baseness of which a Nihilist would not have been capable.

The variety of the notes, and the way in which grave and gay are mingled, serve to mark in striking fashion their spontaneity and the absense of any calculated effect:

Jim Fraser writes to ask how Mlle. Ixe, who was not in the room when Mrs. Cosmo Fox told about the Count, could have known about it. My dramatic description failed to convey to him that Mlle. Ixe was really in the doorway all the time.

Miss Chichester said she thought Marie had improved.

Mr. C. said it seemed only a small book.

The Frasers' criticism was that they found three typographical errors. This is like the bookseller who said it was an awkward shape.

Mr. W. said he should always like Jael better than he had done. Mrs. H. asked if it were not rather a frivolous thing for me to write? Thought Parry was rather like Harry Hawker, but added perhaps it was only that they were both fond of shooting.

Colonel Tippinge could not imagine why the Russian censor had interdicted it. Could not imagine any single sentence to which they could object! Such an exposure of Socialism! Mrs. S. says, "I do like dear Marie's book so much, it shows so clearly what those dreadful people are capable of."

The *Star* began by praising me—got a little sick of the fuss: finally when the fifth edition came out, declared there was nothing in it, neither style, plot, humour, nor anything else.

Mrs. W. "Did so long to know what became of Mlle. Ixe."

Mr. S. said Mme. Novikoff admired *Mlle. Ixe* very much, and Sir Pope Hennessy would not believe it was written by a woman.

MACMILLAN'S PARTY.—Getting amusing when we have to go. Mrs. G. M. hopes I will not mind her introducing a great many people, and introduces only one woman whose name I cannot hear.

Kegan Paul mistakes me for Hawker of Morwenstow. Begins with moral that one

should never leave one's publisher, ends with adjuration to come to him if I do so ! Glimpse of Hutton. On my way home read announcement of " Cecilia " in *P.M.G.* with title which *I* have not yet decided on.

THE NARRATOR'S ART.—Narrators are scattered throughout the land, unconscious of their gift. They usually, however, lack any imagination, so they can only narrate what they have seen with divergence due rather to inaccuracy than fancy. If they had imagination they would not tell so well, because they would not observe so much. On the wings of fancy, did they but possess it, they would be taught to soar from the solid earth of their daily round. A combination of close observation of the actual *and* imagination is as rare—as rare—as a good novelist. Meantime if you analyse any graphic and fascinating account of the fullest and most commonplace episodes, you will find that the secret of their charm consists : 1st, that they are as concrete as possible ; 2nd, that as much as possible is done by dialogue : in other words, they are dramatic.

Example.—I went to the dentist. He said I had delayed too long in coming and he would have to charge two guineas for stopping any tooth with gold, but with cement, just as good,

only one. "Hum!" he said when he had looked at my tooth, "When did you come here last?"

"I think it must have been in August."

"No, it was not in August, for I was out of town then."

"Well, perhaps, now I think of it, it was in July."

"Nine months ago, and I always tell you to come and see me every six months."

"I meant to—but it was not very convenient."

"Well, the consequence is that the hole is very large, and if I stop it with gold it will cost you two guineas."

"And could you stop it with anything else?"

"Certainly, with white cement."

"And has gold any advantages over cement?"

"None, except that it looks better."

"Oh, but that does not matter for a back tooth. I will have cement."

This takes more time to tell and, if written, more space, but how much better. Probably dialogue is always interesting, if it is worthy of the name, because it reflects human character, either of the individual or of the class. In this dull and commonplace dialogue a trace

of humour is faintly perceptible in the position of prisoner at the bar in which the patient is placed and her feeble attempts at evasion. Then the dentist's instinct to take as much as he can get—which obliges him to find a reason. (Imagine his saying, "No advantage, except that I make more money over it.") A reason which is evidently no reason at all.

The fact is, if we could kodak conversations and then leave out the repetitions and feeble aim at points before we hit them, they would be always interesting, because language so reveals character. But when we *imagine* conversation, we are apt for lack of the recollection of character to miss the savour of the actual. By character, and by character above all things, is your tale made moving.

LADY ATHERLEY (in disguise)—speaking of the great general disadvantage of a girl having gone over to Rome—winds up, "And then there need not have been all this trouble about fish and eggs for Friday dinner."

PRAYERS.—Lord Mount Temple visiting the dying Lord Cowper, "Shall I pray for you to-day?" "Yes, one prayer and very short."

NEMESIS.—Miss Ogden, who, when rolls failed at breakfast at a big Scotch house, said,

" Oh ! but I *like* stale bread better than anything," and for all her life afterwards whenever she visits that house she is regularly provided with " stale bread," while the others feast on hot scones.

POETRY AND PROSE.—Lewis Morris reads his poem aloud in a country house. Solemn pause at the close, broken by Mrs. Williamson, " Do you take in the heels of socks in the same way as the heels of stockings ? "

A PURITAN SAINT.—Eagle-faced, dark ; large, open dark eyes. Something in shoulders and wrists and carriage of hands like my father's. All the purity, the unworldliness, the devotion of Austyn, without Austyn's austerity. Rather like an archangel incarnate. Admires Edna Lyall and Mr. Stead. Is cold to protection of animals—is appalled to think that much of the good done for the poor and degraded is done by unbelievers. The line between agnostics and believers, now so wavering and undefined, is hard and fast for him.

MLLE. IXE.—Lady N. observed that she would have liked Mlle. Ixe better if she had been more open and had not entered the house under false pretences and an assumed name.

“ You were so severe in the ‘ Rainy Day ’ on talking about the weather.”

“ I was not. It was the fidgetty old gentleman.”

“ Yes, but of course one fancies you mean what your characters say.”

George Meredith makes everyone talk like himself—even the country squires.

Lady Atherley’s grief: “ Yes, my dear, I feel that her life is blighted (do you take cream ?) and that there is no help for her.”

“ K. was so troublesome, finding fault and asking for all sorts of things one had not got ; just like a servant from a big house.”

“ The interesting man of the party was so charmed by—so set at ease by—the uninteresting woman.”

Mrs. H. can cook but little, but has her *chef-d’œuvre*—horse-radish sauce. Is affected by her own recollections of it. Describes impression made on various gentlemen.

MISS G.’s LETTER.—“ The Duke has been most awfully nice to me and I see a great deal of him. He came right across from where he was sitting and stood for nearly an hour talking

to me about all sorts of things. . . . It was rather an ordeal, as all the dames of high degree who usually keep to their own sitting-rooms had come into the hall in hopes of the Duke noticing them, but to their great disappointment he spent the whole of the evening talking to me and then went straight to his room.

"I think I shall stop on another day or so before returning to Genoa, as the change is doing me so much good. I find myself so much more cheerful and able to look at things from a brighter point of view."

July.—The rain has made the fields darkly, beautifully green—gives a lustrous beauty to the sky and an indescribable richness and depth of colour to the landscape.

TOTLAND BAY.—Growing on downs above the sea, harebells and white clover. The bare down line so firm against the sky, unbroken save for the thick close gorse fitting it like a hood.

TAPELEY HALL, *September.*—Surprise when looking round from the terrace, I saw below and beyond the wood-covered slopes of the Park and the dark Italian pines, an inlet of the sea, grey beneath the reddening sky. Behind our meetings destiny usually sketches a picturesque, a rather melancholy background, as when my friend and I walked up and down,

discoursing, from six till past seven we paced up and down a road overarched by trees, which at one point, just above a precipice, grew only on one side of the way, thus leaving unscreened to us a wide view of the bay and the ships and the curving coast—all in those sad, sweet tones of lilac and dove-grey. And over all the twilight deepening every minute—till we hardly knew whether it was the scene which saddened our say, or our say which saddened the scene.

A RAINY OCTOBER DAY.—The slow melancholy waving of leafless boughs before the window and the sharp patter of rain upon the window pane, coming in gusts with the wind and beyond, the long and constant sighing of the storm in the air and in the chimney, like a stifled complaint.

TOTLAND BAY, *July* 1891.—Sky blue, streaked with mare's tails, so hot, a haze veils even the middle distance with a bloom such as one sees on purple fruit. The sea is crinkled with ripples, blue which looks green against the blue sky, and by some play of water, some drifting of clouds, the sun plays upon it with dazzling effect as if there fell upon the water a shower of rain each of whose drops was a star of light. Towards the shore the waveless water is transparent. You see

through its green, dense, dim delicious crystal. The lowly roll and splash of the surge is changed to the faintest whisper—for the waves do not break—the very last fine curving edge of the water foams slightly as it touches the beach. Another day the boats in the bay look dark; those in the distance sail by like pale grey shades. Rich deep grey sea and sky. A tiny rift through which the smiling sun shines blood-red. Not a disc but a broken gleam.

December 1891.—The zenith tinged with the faintest possible blue faded into colourless air, which in its turn deepened with the glow which seems to girdle these frosty white days. That too was merged in a dull lilac-grey in which floated, half submerged, a dim red ball, over the still white fields and silent woods brooded a thin vapour—the breath of the fierce cold made visible. Against this the dark birds flew past.

April 1892.—Marvellously warm and bright. After an interspace of cold, the warm growing weather is taken up again like a dropped thread. The shadows are as beautiful as the lights. To-day, sitting in the Park, I watched an ideal English distance. The reddish brown of bare fields against the enamelled green of water meadows beyond; the thin wavering line of copse, in the blue that is almost purple,

and beyond, a cloudlike distance, fading, fading away with a dying fall of exquisite colour.

The sounds of the day were as multiform as its colours. A hush of breezes moving in the woods, notes of birds, clear or resonant, the rustle of last year's leaves that the wind tosses over, the cry of the peewit, the baby-bleat of lambs, the deeper-pitched answer of their mothers. But I might listen (covering my eyes to hear better) for hours to gather all the myriad vibrations of its pipes and strings.

AN AUGUST STORM.—The rain pours like a thick veil across the green invested landscape, the thunder mutters and the lightning palpitates in wide, rose-tinted flashes. The effect is sublime and answers to that human craving which demands such masterpieces as "Lear" or the overture to Tannhäuser.

CHAPTER XI

NOTES AND COMMENTS

1893-1894

SEVERAL rather slightly written stories date from about this time. "The Wrong Prescription" appeared in *Good Words*, "An Idealist in the Bud" and "A Royal Reception" in the *English Review*. "The Interrupted Sentence" and "Was it a Ghost?" are others signed with the pseudonym that made them so acceptable to editors. It is impossible to help smiling, as Marie must have done herself, over a passage with Miss Yonge. In spite of the opinion of the author of the *Heir of Redclyffe* that it was "a pity that so fine a book as *Cecilia de Noël* should be injured by the entire absence of Christianity," Marie had been pressed to contribute a story to the Christmas number of the *Monthly Packet*, Miss Yonge's special organ. The story turns on the happy marriage of an English girl with

an Italian nobleman, an innocent subject it would appear on the surface, but Miss Yonge, who did not always include a sense of humour among her other distinguished attributes, sets forth the difficulty arising :

“I endorsed a strong remonstrance in *Mothers in Council* against English girls marrying Italians, as representing much misery which the author knew only too well to be the consequence, and to adopt a story where this is the happy conclusion seems to me inconsistent. . . . But that I know that altering does not answer, and that it would destroy the *point* of your tale, I should have liked Margaret six years after to have seen her lover fat and unromantic, and the doleful state of an Englishwoman in the Castle of the Sea, and to be very thankful to her good father for his prohibition.”

“If Miss Yonge would only carry out her views as to what ought to be the end of the story as explained in her letter to me (exclaims Marie to the editor), it would make an entertaining paragraph. . . . I have never met anyone with so high-pitched a standard.” It seems almost incredible that the story entitled

“Kismet” appeared with a footnote disclaiming Miss Yonge’s responsibility for its opinions.

We take up her notes again :

SUBJECTS TO BE AVOIDED WITH MRS A. — Gladstone. Politics. Charitable works. Salvation Army. Thackeray (disrespectful to the Georges). In fact the Bazaar is the only safe topic.

VISIT TO A PARSONAGE. — Drawing-room scented with sweet peas, exquisitely arranged. Outside, dim and dripping day. Chopin’s heartbroken music. The broad, foreign head, punctilious accentuation and suggestion of much culture and refinement. Impression as before of being held back by outsiders from contact with a soul akin.

A COMEDY.—Mr. E. C. was much struck with W. W.’s poem. Shows it to G. A., J. H., and others who are staying with him. G. A. writes kind review in the *Nineteenth*. Eclat and success. W. W. hastens up to town. Introduced all round by E. C. His head is first turned, then lost. He becomes odious—offends everybody, borrows money, becomes engaged to E. C.’s daughter, breaks it off in two months. Is ruined and finally renounced.

Mrs. C. was perpetually making senseless

remarks and laughing heartily at them. She had the fluency, the gaiety of a wit, but nothing more. I am sure if there were any gallows in the neighbourhood, F. would have them put up at once before her front door. Shrieks of laughter, intended for witty badinage. Is it possible to inherit taste without capacity?

CECILIA.—Lady A. sitting by me at a garden party would like to “ditheuth” it with me. “I think there ought to have been a little more of Cecilia. I should have liked her to be more truly perfect, more truly Christian.” “But was it not Christian? I meant it to be. Where else could you find so much love?” “Oh, perhaps I did not read it very attentively, but I went to Lord S.’s where they were all talking about it.”

I explain my point and am gratified by seeing the lady’s eyes grow moist. Afterwards I am less gratified when I learn that they filled with tears when dry-rot was discovered on her husband’s yacht.

The papers publish and copy various inaccurate statements. Among others that I am going to Chicago Fair next spring. Mrs. Fields, leaving England, writes to invite me to stay with her at Boston.

Mrs. S. is under the impression that the village was redeemed from heathenism by the

advent of herself and her husband for the summer months. Always speaks of the village becoming "as bad as it was before we came."

Parallel to the story that the Ash Wednesday service could not take place because the clerk had gone out rat-catching, is Mr. Creary's attempt to have a saint's day service, when the only parishioners that he can collect are truants from school.

Marie was extremely fond of animals. To her they were all individualities, the cats, the horses, and above all Mr. Bloggs, her little companion of fourteen years, whose arrival we have already seen chronicled in the pages of the "Midge." Later on she writes of him :

His name is a peculiar one, and unfortunate, seeing that no one but a born Celt can pronounce it. We have all long since renounced the attempt and call him simply and incorrectly Bloggs.

Mr. Bloggs' chief beauty is in his eyes, large dark and lustrous, and marking with his equally black and glossy nose, an exquisite triangle in a fluffy, cream-coloured countenance, over which in moments of excitement rise two large and pointed ears. It is then that by

some admirers he is compared to a fox, as at other times—after his bath for instance—he is said to resemble a miniature Polar bear. Miniature, because (though he is not aware of it and would be furious if he understood the statement) Mr. Bloggs is quite a small dog.

But even greater than the charm of his personal appearance is that of his deportment, especially his elegant habit of sitting up, not with an effort and for a short time, as any dog might do, but as easily as he stands on all fours. Frequently, and of his own accord, he adopts this attitude, and when thus poised, as if in prayer, he waves his front paws beseechingly, the effect is irresistible. In this way does he ask for many things—and gets them. Water, when his little bowl is empty, that the door may be opened, that the fire may be lit, and—when out driving—that the carriage may be stopped. There is indeed a rumour that once in the stable yard he was found sitting up in the pony cart, behind the empty shafts, and with waving paws entreating it to carry him somewhere; but this though a possible is not an accredited story. Certain it is, and weird as it is certain, that frequently he has been discovered sitting up in a room where there was no one but himself—to what or to whom talking one hardly likes to think.

He has other marks of the Celtic race and of a high-strung organisation. Not merely does he howl to music, as many curs will do as much from dislike as from admiration; he is an ardent and discriminating amateur. His favourite composers are Schumann and Chopin, and when their compositions are played he often improvises an obligato. Then, when—sitting up, of course—he throws back his head and emits one plaintive wail after another, duly observing the crescendo and decrescendo of the music, glancing between times over his shoulders to see how his art is appreciated by the audience, the impression produced is indescribable, and though it must be confessed that a tendency to the fortissimo sometimes mars the excellence of these renderings, they are still preferred by many people to anything that can be heard in a London concert room.

But the time had come for his mistress to part with this tyrannical but endearing little personality :

Mr. Bloggs had long appeared dropsical. Had twice fainted, was beginning to pant violently, and the night before he died refused a sweet biscuit, but the same day at breakfast

he had flown at the cat and tried to snatch a piece of herring from her. Sunday morning I heard him barking so loudly that I thought he must be better. When F. came down before breakfast he let him out on the front lawn. Presently we saw him climbing up hill with difficulty and holding his nose up to sniff the air. F. went out to fetch him in and I, looking out, saw Bloggs fall on one side and roll down the bank. F. picked him up and brought him in, quite unconscious. Laid before the dining-room fire, we all watched him. He gave two or three little twitches with his paws and with his head. Mother, looking, saw "a flash" pass over his face, as she has seen on human faces, and knew he was dead.

That night F. lifted the carafe the last thing, as usual to fill Bloggs' little bowl !

1893. VILLAGE STORIES. — *A very old woman, speaking of 1830* : " I well remember the day then ; the mob came along the road to go to the mansion, I can seemingly see them now. We lived at the lodge, where Mr. Shaw lives now, and mother she says to me, ' You go and open the gates for 'em and then you come in. Don't 'ee bide out.' So I did and they came and what they called the ringleader, he came, into the house and my

mother she *was* frightened. She didn't know what he might do. He had a great big bludgeon in his hand and so had everyone of them, bless you. And he says, 'Missis, where's your husband?' 'He's never at home in the day,' she sez; 'he's up at the house.' 'I'll see that,' he says, and he goes right through. My poor old grandmother, she sit there by the fire, so old, she could see nothing, and she was so frightened. 'O Master,' she said, 'don't 'ee pray hurt me, n'it my daughter, n'it the children, for we can't help nothing.' And he came up to her, I can mind so well, 'Don't you fear, Granny, we won't harm you, but we want all the men, for the times is going to be changed.' 'And can you change them, do you think?' 'Aye, that we shall,' he says. 'Everyone shall have cheese and meat, that can hardly get bread now.'"

She told how they went up to the mansion and sought for her father, in the stables and loft, poking with a prong among the hay, but fortunately without discovering or prodding a blackleg who lay in concealment. Then they went to the front door and harangued Mr. Fellowes, threatening if he did not give them five pounds to smash every window. This he refused, but offered to help any of his own parish (these visitations seem to have

given an effectual spur to almsgiving), but though they refused, they left without doing any harm. They went to Whitchurch, where they made "such a work, I don't know what they didn't do. Broke into the shops and took the bread and eat it. Ah, they was terrible times to be sure. There wasn't a night but you see'd the burnings somewhere."

Mrs. Hobbes says the times have changed indeed. The children had to go out and work in the fields at eight years of age sometimes. She herself had tended pigs and geese in such cold weather that the icicles hung about her bonnet. "Mrs. S., when I went for the lamb's milk, she took me in and give me some hot sloe wine and bread and butter and sat me aside o' the fire to get warm, but March was worst of all for then I was in the fields to keep the birds from the green corn and I stamped and hollered with the cold." Food, potatoes (sometimes with a tiny bit of bacon or butter to flavour them) for breakfast, potatoes for supper—they drank the liquor the potatoes were boiled in. Tea, six shillings a pound, the children never touched it. The mother bought an ounce at a time and made it last. Harvest time was best. Reaping was done with the reaping hook, by women as well as men. A guinea an acre was the

price, and father, mother, and children could earn that in a day, working hard and for long hours. Then the "leasings" were worth having. Her mother brought corn back and threshed it in her kitchen with a stick. Afterwards winnowed it on sheets in the road. There was one year the wheat sprouted in the ear and the flour that year was bad. As she sat in the chimney corner beside the oven door, she cried, "Mother, the bread is running out of the oven." It trickled out and "looked as brown as treacle." Mother was told how to amend this by mixing alum. It tasted not exactly bad, but "sweety-like." Yes, she too remembered the riots. It was the coming of the machines and the fall of wages that followed. There were blacklegs who hid and were forcibly dragged out to march and protest with the others. She told of her mother working all day in the fields and baking and washing all night in the busy time of harvest.

Mrs. Taylor relates with some complacency her extreme nervousness on a journey in the early days of railways:

"I *was* in a way. There was a nice woman spoke to us. If it hadn't been for her, I

shouldn't ha' gone—such a way I was in; my son was quite frightened. I pretty nigh fainted right away. My fingers went like that (shaking them), and I turned as white—t'was the express frightened me pretty nigh to death. The woman says, 'Be you going to Andover?' 'Well, I was,' I said, 'but really it do overcome me so, I hardly knows.' 'Oh,' she says, 'you'll get the better of it, it'll pass. The express was too much for you. Pity you come up before it passed.' But I didn't get the better of it for days. All of a tremble I was." Apropos of the great preponderance of girls at the present time, Miss C. told me that seventy years ago when they were all so scantily and poorly fed, there was only *one* girl-child in Hurstbourne.

Old Mrs. Lindsay told mother that as a girl (about 1830) she remembered the famine in Aberdeen. The eager waiting for the meal boats at the harbour. Want so great and nursing mothers so *famished that the children drew blood with the milk.*

THE NEW IDEAS ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.—Mrs. Leslie had one little girl, a good little thing, well brought up. Then after sixteen years' repose, during which she

held forth largely on the science of education, arrived another baby, Davy. Davy, aged four or five, comes to play with little Gerard Trevor, aged six. Sounds of discussion arise:

G. "Auntie, he has taken away my wheelbarrow."

"Well, dear, let him have it and you get something else."

Renewed sounds: "Auntie, he takes all my toys. He won't let me have one of them." Tableau of Davy holding on to the wheelbarrow, ball, &c.

Mrs. Leslie approaches the situation with tact.

"How kind of Gerard to lend you all these beautiful toys, darling. Kiss dear Gerard, Davy."

Davy, setting his teeth: "Gerard nasty"—tries to bite him.

Mrs. Leslie, discreetly: "I think we must be going. Now, Davy darling, give back the toys to dear Gerard."

Davy firmly declines and, when the point is pressed, begins to roar. Mrs. Leslie: "I think, dear Miss Trevor, we must just leave them, and as we go along in the carriage I will seize the opportunity, when he is not looking, to drop them out one by one."

Harry was invited the other day to play a

practical joke on a midshipman in a country house. He declined on the grounds of a person intimately acquainted with the nature of lions and tigers, who might refuse to prick one of them with a pin while asleep. Is justified by learning afterwards that the man who *had* played the practical joke was prostrate with a broken collar-bone, having been mysteriously tripped up, going downstairs.

MEETING TO FORM A TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.
—Mr. W. is invited to make financial statement. “Well, six-and-something is subscribed at door.” Then he had books and cards to order, so sent up fifteen shillings to the society, but did not have things to that amount. Then there was the railway journey of the speakers from Andover to Hurstbourne, return—made a note of, but unfortunately lost. (General discussion as to what it would be.) Mr. W. recollects that it was not to Andover but to Gradeley. Solemn and significant “Ah!” as if the difference were enormous. “Well, then, there were the books and there ought to be another bill, but I am afraid I don’t know where it is. I can’t make out this.” After puzzling for some time, “Ah yes, I see. Some of the things were ordered for myself and some for Mrs. P., so you see you add the three-and-

six and the six-and-something and it is all right." Vicar (sadly), "I'm afraid I don't see."

Unravelled by degrees that we have received six-and-sevenpence and spent five-and-twopence (satisfactory, but probably incorrect). We end with a sally on lethargy of the Church by Mrs. P. and regrets that vows taken against intoxicating drinks by young children cannot be made permanent "like baptismal vows."

OUR PARISH COUNCIL.—At the preliminary meeting, Mrs. W. had arranged (mentally) that of course Mr. W. (vicar) should take the chair. Imagine her feelings when she learns that it has been occupied by Mr. R. the Dissenting minister.

"But did nobody say anything?" eyeing Peter angrily.

"Well, I told them they must choose a chairman—that somebody must propose and somebody must second."

"Ho!" (anger unappeased). "Well, of course we must take care it does not happen a second time."

"Well, I am afraid we can hardly prevent it. Having been elected chairman, he cannot well be removed."

“ Do you mean ” (wildly) “ that he is going to be chairman always, then ? ”

“ Well, yes, unless we formally propose a change, and even then it would have to be put to the ballot.”

“ Ho ! ”

Lady caller, wishing to convey a sufficient sense of someone's high social distinction, said to us, “ You remember the baccarât scandal ? Well, she *was one of the House-Party !* ”

SERMON (*extract*).— On greatness of the Divine Being.—“ Let us take the subject of *Languages*, dear friends. There are at least seven or eight countries even in Europe and the people of each of those countries speaks a quite different language. Now, dear friends, God understands all these different languages—just think—He has not got to learn them. He knows them perfectly, grammar and words and all ! ”

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO WRITE A SHORT STORY

SOME time in 1897 Miss Hawker wrote an essay with the above title. It does not seem to be quite finished, and the MS. is altered and corrected, but it is written very freely with her usual conciseness, and it is so full of practical suggestions that it can hardly fail to be of value to many people as the deliberate advice of one who is acknowledged to be past master on her subject and who does her best to let us into her secret.

“The art of writing a short story,” she says “is like the art of managing a small allowance. It requires the same care, self-restraint and ingenuity, and, like the small allowance, it affords excellent practice for the beginner, for by the very limitations it imposes on her ambition, it preserves her from errors of judgment and taste into which she might be hurried by fancy or fashion.

Many things are lawful, if not expedient, in the three-volume novel that in the short story are forbidden: moralising, for instance, or comments of any kind, personal confidence or confessions. These can indeed be made so entrancing that the narrative itself may be willingly foregone. The wit of a Thackeray, the wisdom of a George Eliot has done as much; but these gifts are rare, so rare that our beginner will do well to assume that she has them not and stick fast to her story, since on that tiny stage, where there is hardly room for the puppets and their manœuvres, there is plainly no space for the wire-puller.

Even more cheerfully may be renounced those many addenda called explanations. Nowhere in a story can they possibly be welcome. At the end they would be preposterous, at the beginning they scare away the reader, in the middle they exasperate him. Who does not know the chill with which, having finished a lively and promising chapter, one reads at the beginning of the next, "And now we must retrace our steps to explain," or words to that depressing effect. Explain what?—the situation? That should have explained itself. Or the relation of the actors? A word or two in the dialogue might do as much. More, I, as the reader, do not wish to learn,

I am fully interested, I am caught in the current of the tale, I am burning to know if the hero recovered, if the heroine forgave, if the parents at last consented ; I am in no mood to listen to a *précis* of the past events that prepared this dilemma, or of the legal, financial, or genealogical complications by which it is prolonged. With these dry details the author may do well to be acquainted for the due direction and confirmation of his plot, but the reader has nothing to do with them, and in a work of art they are as needless and as unsightly as the scaffolding round a completed building or the tacking threads in a piece of finished needlework.

Equally incompatible with the short story is that fertile source of tedium, redundancy. "The secret of being wearisome," says the French proverb, "is to tell everything." What then is the end of those who tell not merely everything, but—if an Irish turn be permitted—a great deal more ? It is to encourage the practice of skipping in the general reader, and, much to the detriment of more parsimonious writers, in the reviewers as well. A large number of weak and washy novels might be converted into readable stories by the simple process of leaving out about two volumes of entirely superfluous and uninteresting matter.

On the staff of an amateur magazine to which in early youth the writer contributed, there was one most obliging and useful member whose business it was to provide "copy" for the odd corners and inevitable spaces between the more important papers. He wrote, you will observe, not because he had anything in the world to say or tell, but because a certain amount of space must at all costs be covered, and the effusions thus inspired he signed with the appropriate pseudonym of "Phillup Bosch." How often in fiction of a certain class may even now be recognised the handiwork of this industrious writer. The sparkle of his early touch is gone, but his purpose is the same, and without his aid there are three-volume novels that could never have been written. Fortunately the short story is independent of him.

The disadvantages of the short story become more distinct when we consider its possible theme. The crowded stage and wide perspective of the novel proper; all transformations of characters and circumstance in which time is an essential element, the intricately tangled plot, knot by knot unfolded, these are beyond its reach. The design of the short story must itself be short—and simple. A single, not too complicated incident is best ;

the one entire and perfect action that Aristotle considered the best subject for fable or poem, embodying the stage-manager's advice to aspiring dramatists, quoted by Coppée in his *Contes en prose* :

“ If they come to me with their plays when I am at breakfast, I say—‘ Look here, can you tell me the plot in the time it takes to eat this boiled egg ? If not—away with it—it is useless.’ ”

It may be observed that all these suggestions are of a negative order and concerned with the “ tact of omission.” This is indeed of the first importance in the composition of the short story. As a famous etcher once said to the writer while she stood entranced before a study of river, trees, and cattle that his magic touch had converted into a very poem—“ The great thing is to know what to leave out.” It is part of that economy already insisted upon “ to express only the characteristic traits of succeeding actions ” and, as Mr. Besant exhorts us, to suppress all descriptions which hinder instead of help the action, all episodes of whatever kind, all conversations which do not either advance the story or illustrate the characters. How this essential and characteristic matter is to be distinguished from all around is another question. One which

to decide upon a great French master of the art describes as “un travail acharné.” But it is often made easy by native instinct like that which directs those born story-tellers—their name is legion—of all conditions, who never put pen to paper, but who in hall or college, drawing-room or kitchen, inn-parlour or smoking-room, whenever they unfold a tale, hold their audience attentive and engrossed. Their method when analysed appears to depend, first on their firm grasp of the main point and purport of their story, next on their liberal use of dialogue in the telling of it. Thus do the listeners of one enchanting *raconteuse*, at least, explain the dramatic flavour she imparted to the commonest incidents of domestic life. This is what she would have made of a theme so ungrateful as the butcher having sent a joint larger than ordered : a fair average weight for a leg of mutton being declared by experts to be eight pounds.

“Directly I went into the larder I said, ‘Jane, what on earth is that?’

“‘Why, ma’am,’ she said, ‘it is the leg of mutton you ordered.’

“‘What!’ I said, ‘the *small* leg of mutton? Where is the ticket?’

“‘Please, ma’am, the butcher’s boy has not brought it.’

“ I said, ‘ Tell him to come into the kitchen.’ ”

“ When he came I made her weigh that leg of mutton before him. It weighed eleven pounds four ounces ! ”

“ I said, ‘ Take that back to your master and ask him from me if he calls that a *small* leg of mutton ? ’ ”

The expression, the intonation, the, at times, almost tragic emphasis, it is unfortunately impossible to reproduce ; but even in this colourless record we may admire the terseness and vigour, the masterly opening that at once arouses curiosity, and the artistic reserve that does not by outcry or comment detract from the force of the climax. We may consider too how in some hands this simple tale might have been embroidered and hindered : by description of the scenery outside the kitchen window ; by a minute account of the lady’s family and connections, or of the previous history of the cook ; by a dissertation on joints in general, with other digressions too numerous to mention, and you may divine by comparison what constitutes the characteristics of a short story.

If you review the tablets of your memory and mark the scenes imprinted upon them, you will see that whereas some figures, incidents, speeches, even details of background, are vivid as ever, others have vanished away.

Again, you will find that a conversation may be often best reported by suppressing all the repetitions and superfluous phrases that encumbered the actual dialogue. Lastly, if you attentively consider the character of someone you know and understand, you may discover that it is revealed and epitomised in particular words and actions, and that by repeating these you might present a much more striking portrait of the original than by a lengthy memoir of all that he or she did or said in common with other people. Thus from your own experience you may gather hints as to the kind of condensation desirable for the short story. Others may be gathered from the study of the best literature; but in this, as in every form of creative work, the artist, in the beginning as at the end, must draw his chief inspiration from life itself. There is one thing that the shortest story does not exclude, and that is the highest artistic ambition. That the length of a work is no measure of its importance or effect is best illustrated by such masterpieces as the minor poems of Milton, Wordsworth, or Shelley. The literary capabilities of the short story, still in its infancy, have got to be discovered, probably by this very generation. Therefore must writers of it be exhorted to cherish the highest aims in their writing,

to lavish on it the greatest care. Nowhere can signs of weariness, of haste or scamping, be so inexcusable as on the miniature ivory of the short story. Rather it deserves the finish of the finest cameo, of the most highly polished gem.

CHAPTER XIII

THOUGHT NOTES

1894-1898. 1898-1900

BETWEEN 1894 and 1898 comes a gap in her notes, and it is a time that is with difficulty filled by the recollection of her friends. The years seem outwardly to have been marked by few events, but there is no doubt that where her inward life was concerned she passed through a crucial period. When the diary reopens it becomes more introspective; the spiritual life has assumed far larger proportions. Several times in after years she speaks of the trials and struggles of this time as something to look back upon with pain, a time from which she is thankful to have escaped. During these years her health steadily declined. Up to the age of twenty she had been strong and healthy, but the change from sunny France to a damp English valley was a trying one. At twenty-three she had had a very severe attack of measles,

which told on her, and from this time she constantly chronicled her bad colds in the pages of the *Midge*. In October we read that "Miss Hawker, determined not to be behindhand, has already started her winter cold," or again, "Miss Hawker's cough, being extremely aggressive, is a source of aggravation to the rest of the family."

Mrs. Fennell was a very robust woman and never ill herself; she was hardly able to grasp what it meant to be always "ailing." In later years she reproached herself very much for not having taken more care of Marie in the early stages of her complaint, but medical science was still old-fashioned, and Mrs. Fennell herself had never heard of the form of chronic internal catarrh from which her daughter suffered. This now grew much worse, and she also became the prey of a distressing form of dyspepsia. She was not one of those people who "enjoy" bad health. In her desire to regain her normal strength she tried one method after another. She went through a very drastic form of treatment, of which her mother did not quite approve at the time, and which Marie herself afterwards acknowledged to be a mistake. She tried the Salisbury treatment, strict vegetarian-

ism, semi-starvation, and it is not surprising to find that she grew worse rather than better.

In 1896 her brother died, and the grief attendant on this loss and the supporting her mother, whose sorrow for the death of her only son was deep and long-lived, threw a fresh strain upon the delicate organisation, and with failing health came another deep disappointment. A few short years before, fame and recompense had seemed within her grasp. From all quarters came requests for stories. From America in 1893 she received an offer of two hundred and fifty pounds for a short story, to be published in an exclusive series which included such names as Kipling, Barrie, and Marion Crawford. Literary work hides many tragedies, and among the saddest must be the discovery that ill-health has blighted the roots of the mind, and that the power of creation has become too fierce an effort for the delicate frame.

It would perhaps be too sad to write about, if it were not that in the midst of apparent failure Marie achieved so noble a self-conquest. The spiritual had always had an attraction which drew her away from the more human interest in her stories, and from this time the wealth

of inner thought, which was still welling, flowed towards the unseen life. Her faith was called in to support and perfect her in the altered aspect her life presented, and from this time we get the history of a soul, told with that genuineness of insight, that absolute sincerity, which generates charm and appeals to sympathy.

When her "thought notes" begin again, in 1898, she is still struggling against certain impulses of impatience, which to those around her she seemed so completely to have mastered. She contrasts two characters, of which the second is evidently her own:

Ideala, like the sun, shone on the evil and the good. Faults against herself were easily forgiven—those against others were not remembered, as in Reala's case, with the fierce indignation of the undisciplined spirit. Besides the strong and prevailing reasonableness of her character, the wisdom that went with its sweetness preventing her indulging, for a selfish indulgence it is—in any form of indignation that was useless, or worse than useless.

The first thing to be crushed is the superficial impatience that is aroused by the things of

minute circumstance. The deaf person who will not hear, the drawer that will not open, the necessary implement that *will* not be found.

Every morning and every evening some of us exercise certain muscles not required in the day's work. We assume attitudes, we make motions that we probably shall never require in ordinary life. Would the answer to this in the spiritual life be the picturing to ourselves all trials and forcing ourselves to accept them, not only languidly but cheerfully? On the other hand is the advantage of not crossing the bridge till we come to it. On the whole the best rule seems to be to tighten the strings—to assume the ideal attitude two or three times a day. Speak less, speak slowly, act slowly.

As to supineness of that kind that prevents us, not from following an obvious path, but from striking out one for ourselves, the very fact that we do *not* may be the proof that we are not able and therefore not required to do it.

To myself as a child the idea that sound and light must travel came as a great surprise.

Perhaps it is still more surprising to find that spiritual blessings are subject to the same law, and that even the answer to prayer—the real prayer that asks only the real good—cannot be transmitted immediately.

Thus in discouragement and perplexity over the special position which with its leisure and quiet afforded such opportunities for the work she absolutely *could not* do, she prayed earnestly and insistently for grace to see what she *could* do. The answer came at length, better than she expected. In a sudden flash she saw how the position might be irradiated, beautified, blessed for all around by a beautiful soul, and how this benediction might give meaning and worth of the right kind, even to a life maimed and hindered by her peculiar cross of mental as well as physical disability :

The background or shape on which this life is to be lived has its advantages ; comfort, dainty food, pleasant rooms, a lovely garden, none of the disturbance or worries inseparable from the presence of too many people—not to speak of poverty or severe chronic illness. But one really remarkable person did all that was needed to preserve the average—to lower it, in fact—by a marvellous combination of semi-insanity—temper and restlessness. (The allusion is, of course, to her stepfather.)

And what the flash disclosed was how the Cross, which could not, it was plain, be either

altered or removed, might be rendered more bearable by a patience which, instead of adding fuel to the flame, sought to lighten it for others. Patience, but it is to be not lugubrious, but a joy or at least a cheerful patience. The experience steadily considered of the spiritual life shows that there also, as in physical existence, reigns immaculate Law. The promises of reward are absolutely certain, *in time*. Live in certain conditions, and certain qualities appertaining to them must be eventually acquired in a world where law reigns.

In my intercourse with J. and H. there was great pleasure, owing to the affectionate kindness their whole manner and treatment conveyed, and I left them with a most grateful sense of being richer than I had perceived.

Resolve to do everything in the best possible way. Avoid the too common mode of getting through things as an idle child might get through its tasks with eyes strained towards playtime. Resist the tendency of nerve-restlessness to make one do things in a hurried and uncomfortable manner. The parcel has to be packed: take time and thought to collect the materials. The note has to be written: don't write it in a hasty uncomfortable manner—mental attitude, like carriage, is important. Sit down squarely to your task and do it with

thought and deliberation. And the interruption by a demand for attention, help or amusement? Strive to rise to that appeal as to a royal message, and respond with all your powers. Avoid all criticisms and complaints that are not really necessary. There have been some delightful days, in spite of unrefreshing sleep and its consequences. And again in the sunlight one not only drinks in its beauty and all the beauty it reveals, but one is able to perceive what has been gained in the shadow.

Good works in all things, spirit as well as matter, with line upon line, touch upon touch: a method of which all workers, from the ploughman and the mason to the artist and the poet, are the symbols.

I sometimes feel, through and beyond this earthly tabernacle, the wide aisles and unfathomable vault of the Home made without hands. Without this growing sense to fill the void and change that comes with years, one's heart must be benumbed or *break* over the days that are no more. Dear tender shadows, that which you veiled and represented—your real essence and treasure—is safe with Christ in God.

A by no means enduring condition. It comes like a gleam of sunshine on a stormy day, and then the prose and the drudgery of the foggy, commonplace atmosphere envelop one again.

Something of the old fretted and irritable state culminated to-day — continued conflict with tedious difficulties, interruptions of the most prolonged kind, all magnified by a feverish condition of body and mind, increased by the heavy atmosphere of a thundery day. At the end one regrets the discomfort very little and the impatience very much. I have not been positively cross to anyone, but I have literally sworn *sotto voce* more than once. I do not love the deeps. The *Te Deum* prayer rises to my lips, "Lift me up for ever," and the preamble, "govern me." In no other way can it be done—without our entire consent and effort He is not able to govern us.

These and other thoughts came to me in the cathedral¹ as the organ was playing with that mentally illuminating power music so often bestows, probably because it quickens the torpid fibres of sensation by which we perceive spiritually as well as physically, for I doubt—I doubt if anyone is ever in this life out of the body, and suspect that its faculties count for something in the highest spiritual faculties and visions. Whether we like it or not, we are fast shut in this body of material manifestation; when we think we rise from it we probably fall into poor and false dreams. Let us therefore study

¹ Winchester.

the facts of life—let us live strenuously in the Actual.

Of course one goes back to the Bible. In no book are there such scattered treasures of thought answering to the deepest universal wants. No need of Councils and Synods—the human heart often mistakes the letter and secures the spirit.

We can get the Revelation from Real Life alone, and all religions and their teachings are but keys to the interpretation of this earthly but Divine tuition.

Also with the music came one of these flashes—vivid and short-lived as lightning—of the perception of Divine love. The raptures of the Saints must be the same light, in sustained glow. It figured itself to me like something almost caressingly tender, like that which is expressed in the common maternal gesture: the woman laying her cheek against the head of the child nestling on her bosom. If this by chance is ever read, it may be consoling and encouraging to other forlorn and shipwrecked brothers to perceive to what poor creatures the heavenly door is set open.

The Holy, or rather the Human Family, is the supreme sacrament and the supreme education; that is why it so powerfully attracts alike the artistic and the popular heart.

To realise, not in picture or in poem, but in actual life, *The Family*, to make the life of the Family as it ought to be, or even approaching that—*possible*—that is the highest end of all human religion and civilisation.

Anything that taints family life is like the poison introduced into the Holy Cup; it is the worst sacrilege.

By clearly realising what not to do, one often perceives what one ought to do.

When this was written Marie was staying in Winchester. Her sister had suggested that she should set up a tiny refuge of her own, something in the nature of a workshop, close to her mother's house, a place to which she might retire from time to time when peace and quiet became essential, and where she would be able to write undisturbed and to spend the night if she wished. The attempt to carry out this advice resulted in her taking a lodging in Winchester, high on a hill above the town. She loved the cathedral city, was fortunate in finding a good landlady, and visited the "little haven," as she called it, constantly in the years that followed.

It would be perhaps superfluous, possibly tedious, to give all the severe and critical self-

examination to which Marie Hawker subjected herself during these years. Her tendency to analyse and criticise was turned upon her own character. The entries, almost day by day through 1898 and 1899, are short and terse. That she has been through a time of great mental suffering is apparent. She speaks more than once of having come through Purgatory and there is nothing morbid in her comments. She accuses herself of impatience and constant failure, but she does not exaggerate. She gives due weight to the provocation she meets with and she is ready and willing to recognise every encouragement of spirit vouchsafed to her. We may judge that long before this, before the days of literary success, she had aspired to the Higher Life, for she writes in July 1899, "Crossing a great sweep of furrow land to-day, it occurred to me that perhaps the severe discipline of the last few years was the inevitable answer to the prayers of '86." "Grant me, Lord, a place," she said.

"Certainly we know not what we ask—but I do not repent if it *can* be granted."

Then a few days later :

"Alas, how slight seems the effect of dis-

cipline, by no means slight when one has to reproach oneself to-day with a very cramp of inhospitality. Sometimes it would seem as if it were the reverse of my favourite story, and 'les autres n'étaient pas à Liège' so emphatically and numerous present do these 'diables' seem. Prickly dislike, condemnation of other people's faults, hardness in thought or tone, the impulse to dilate on grievances, to 'confidanter,' so unsuitable that our nerve of absurdity is touched. Then all disappears and the heavy atmosphere becomes light."

Strongest of all qualities which stand out through these years is her indomitable courage. She might so easily, we might almost say so excusably, have given way and have abandoned a struggle made wearisome by disappointment, by the uncongenial element ever present in her home, by the trial of constant ill-health in a most depressing form, and so giving way, we can see that she might have become a fractious, irritable woman, armed with a stinging tongue. But there is never a word of wavering. After every mention of a burst of impatience, she ends "once again to the Breach"—and makes fresh resolutions. And so over and over again her friends speak to us of her gentleness and

patience, qualities which all through her life seem absolutely typical of her outward personality.

Her young nieces supply a lighter side in their recollections of her. She was shy with children and not very clever with them, but she was delightful company to those with whom she was at her ease. She could tell the most amusing fairy tales which she reeled off from surrounding conditions, sending the baby off in imagination on his travels, and telling of all the wonderful adventures that happened to him. There was the story of the little girl, to whose fingers, whether for a punishment for covetousness or for pilfering, everything she tried to grasp, stuck fast, and who, seeking to annex some gold buttons on a lady's coat, was dragged along and could not be released till someone said, "Poor little girl," when the spell was broken.

A love of being alone, inherent in all the Hawker family, gained upon Marie, and if not combated might have developed, as it had done with certain eccentric relatives, into a distaste for seeing anyone. Yet she could not for long be happy away from her own people :

I was unwell and unhappy at Reigate. Why, it is impossible to say, for the air was ideal and both rooms of the lodging had a south aspect. Every change seems to produce some *malaise*, but it gets better in a few days. At Reigate on the contrary it increased. The demoralisation of mind and body was worse, much worse than when I arrived. I could not read so conscientiously. I could not write at all. The old heavy cloud stretched over everything again, the old film crept over my brain. I was improvident enough to have no hand-work. I had not the energy to prepare any. In this hapless state, alone in lodgings, without companionship, without any of the interests that home affords, with nothing in fact to divert my mind, I spent a most lugubrious week. I had to remind myself constantly that I might have been much worse, that there is such a thing as pain. I have been worse. I have known times of *Heimweh* that came with suffocating force and made one pace the room as one does in sharp pain.

And yet I was stimulated to this move by a sense of increasing vigour, mental and physical, with the conviction that I was independent and strong enough to remake and mould my own life. I felt as if my legs were firm under me. I start and they instantly give way. The sense

of languor and inefficiency were inexplicable.¹ It was all I could do to achieve the needful calculating, packing, paying, necessary to carry me from Reigate to London and then home.

I only succeeded in this by doing everything at the most deliberate pace. It is like acting under the influence of some depressing narcotic. At such times the stars as well as the trees are invisible. Prayerless the days are not, for the indescribable nerve weariness shapes itself constantly into a cry for support or submission, but interest flags in divine as well as human things. Literature, art, even nature, charm me no longer. I feel nothing. I only believe. Is it my heart? Is it my brain? How will it end? In death, or worse for myself or everybody else, in some collapse of brain and limbs that will leave me inert and a burden on the lives of others?

Already this is better, that I am able to review it!

I write partly to remind myself of what has happened to make the situation clearer to myself. Then perhaps I may detect the way out, or if there be no way out, the best attitude *in*. My marching orders, or if it must be, standing orders.

In thinking over my little boys,² I was struck

¹ She learnt afterwards that this was a heart symptom.

² Her brother's children.

by the recollection of Cecil's exclamation: "Oh, how long are you going to stay? Couldn't you stay for a lot of weeks?" It burst from him, not on account of a present or promise of toffy or apples, but at a speech of mine in answer to his own admiration of the yellow leaves; I said they were indeed beautiful, like golden lace, and called his attention to the crimson of the Virginian creeper and said, "This is what makes the autumn so beautiful."

There come back to me, at times, scenes of dream-like beauty in our visit to Southsea of all places. Those dying days when on a sea of silver, tinged with lilac shadows, boats—fairy boats, not made with hands—went floating off into the golden haze of sunset. More distinct than those visions themselves remains with me their effect and suggestion that that ætherial world we saw from the beach was the *real* one, and that of the lodging-houses and shops and trains waiting behind to engulf us and blind us was the unreal.

At the same time I feel bound to append that this material fact would be indispensable to the true perception and comprehension of the fancy.

The religious or philosophical attitude ought to be ours on lowest grounds. The repose of humility, the comfort of resignation. Before

taking this step I acknowledged it might be a wrong one. I accepted the possible failure and the attendant discomforts. The discomforts are only too inevitable. *Eh bien!* to the already sufficiently nauseous draught the bitter taste of regret is not added. I did my best. My best was very poor, but in any case, having done it, the matter passes out of my hands and becomes a trial, like any other trial.

That actual life should be full of idylls, romances, poems, is not so wonderful, incredible though it be to many! But what surprises me is that the leading rôles in some of the most moving dramas are filled by actors so essentially prosaic and commonplace. It is not the novelists or the poets or the artistic people who always play the parts they could appreciate or describe. It is someone who could not explain a fraction of his feeling—even to himself.

There are some artistic effects which are not merely artistic but inevitable if we copy from life. We know the picturesque value of the youthful and playful element—whether in the forms of cherubs or elves. Things are so ordered in the actual world that this element is always forthcoming—even in the most prosaic places. This was suggested to me by the little page-boys in a big hotel. Two of these gambolling up the stairs I was climbing at Charing

Cross, and challenging each other to take longer and longer strides, came with charming relief into that gorgeous, murky scene of bustle and business.

The exquisite conciseness and comprehensiveness of the Collect (21st Sunday after Trinity) suggests that among the things that improve with the age of the observer are the Collects. And my thoughts, drifting from one point to another, brought back how at the time of my mother's illness I felt when looking at her: *il nous fallait absolument un Dieu*, if not for ourselves, then for our cherished ones.

December 1, 1900.—So dark and short and raw a day. During my walk there seemed nothing lovely or bright to notice except (a thankworthy exception) the exquisite and happy carolling of the birds, thrushes especially, in the Cocklelorum woods.

After ——'s long account to me of her elaborate struggles and devices to avoid wounding the susceptibilities of the townspeople, I remember that after all neither *she* nor *he* are very popular!

This is one of the innumerable cases where *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*, and where in fact one burns the candle with hardly any *jeu* at all.

If one considered fully that Nature was a revelation, might one not make a kind of culte of its beauty, bringing oneself more and more to observe and venerate its commonest manifestations: the sky, the light, the dawn, the sunset, the stars? Might not this be so organised as to afford as much comfort and inspiration as the ritual, say, of the Roman Catholic Church?

After glancing over Huxley's Life, I end with the strong impression of a soul, not perishing, but famished for the Divine. His was one of those that can be satisfied with nothing less. The sadness of this unfulfilled, unconfessed craving is to be read in his portrait.

Inimitable Leech! When I tried to begin to-day my work of clipping and pasting together the tattered remains of his books, I could do nothing but look and giggle. One example of his miraculous power of expression are the two hands (no more is visible) of the woman holding "Master Frank, who does *not* want to be dipped."

Ju's children came, Siola looking, as she is, quite grown-up. This constant change in life, marking so emphatically the flight of time, ought to be enough to give us pause and thought. Yet sometimes and for long we see only the dance.

We do not notice the changing aspects of the dancers or the gaps in their ranks.

December 17.—Mother took a walk to-day, the first time for ten days. She enjoyed all the beauty, the first azure between the clouds, the lovely shades of mauve and russet on the woodland. It is given me to see that this is one of the episodes which at a later time one would buy with rubies.

December 23.—I have been making wreaths and preaching persistently the simplifications of decorations.

Christmas Day.—Lunched with the Ports-mouths. Mr. Pusey at the Park. Having asked many questions about "Mlle. Ixe," finished by flattering inquiry whether she killed or only wounded the Count.

We have Christmas roses, angelic flowers! on our dinner table, mingled most becomingly with holly. Mother was able to see Helen Tippinge, but her escort, Mr. Harrison, I entertained in the dining-room, discovering only towards the end that he was the son of *the* Harrison—Frederick Harrison.

Yesterday I lunched at the Park—only Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton.

CHAPTER XIV

HER MOTHER'S DEATH

1901

THE year 1901 was perhaps the saddest of Marie Hawker's life. The circumstances were three-fold: the declining health and death of her mother, the increasing difficulty of her step-father's temper and conduct, and her own continued delicacy and physical depression. Her diary during this time is mournful reading enough, yet not altogether sad, for the brave spirit of faith and patience never fails; amid all the self-accusations of want of self-control we are aware of the growth of that steady dependence on a higher strength which moulded her character. The sense of religion she expresses is absolutely genuine. She was by nature hasty, impetuous and impatient, but so unflinchingly did she school herself that those who knew her in later years could not believe she had ever erred in those ways. "Aunt Marie impatient!" exclaimed

one of her nieces, "why she was the very gentlest person I ever knew."

As we have already stated, the stepfather was a great and ever-present trial to his wife's family, and the peculiarities which were scarcely more than a source of entertainment in high-spirited youth, helped by the support of a brother and sister who laughed with her, became almost insupportable to the delicate, overstrung woman, left alone and obliged continually to witness a domineering temper directed against a dearly loved and failing mother. Mr. Fennell was genuinely attached to his wife, and she seems on the whole to have understood him and, though much exasperated at times, to have discounted his tiresome ways, after the manner of married people. But the remarks in Marie's diary show plainly what the provocation must have been. As years went on, Mr. Fennell became so violent in language and temper, so unbalanced and unreliable, that those who knew him best thought that he was not altogether accountable for his eccentricities. These took the very inconvenient form of constant interference with the household—coals were locked up and doled out, raids made upon the kitchen, and the maids scolded and accused till it became difficult to persuade a ser-



MRS. FENNELL

LIBRARY

vant to remain. Everyone was charged with being in league against the master of the house, and all this conduct was accentuated by a vain, wordy, noisy personality, without discretion and without consideration for the invalid or for anyone else. His deafness enveloped the simplest details of attendance on illness with a quite farcical fuss and fury. The mere preparation of a tray for the sick room was the signal for shouts of "Have you got this—or that?" enumerating all the articles plainly visible on it, and for extraordinary misconstruction of the answers shouted in return. Her mother's illness and relapses, and the usual accompaniment of nagging and fussing, render sufficiently comprehensible Marie's lament that she has lost her sense of the ridiculous at a time when it might be gratified to the utmost. A short time before she had written :

"F. performed to-night that ungrace during meat which consists in finding fault with every successive course, or its preparation or its presentation. Mother was as surprised as if it had never occurred before, and I was as surprised (rather unsympathetically so) at her surprise.

"How often have I felt that we are and have been for years and years like three squirrels in a cage!"

Such an entry as the following acquires additional significance :

In the art of conduct, like all other arts, leaving out is of great importance. Difficult though it may be to realise that any merely negative rule can be so valuable, there is no doubt that by omission merely many unsatisfactory and many inartistic lives might be made not only inoffensive but admirable.

The observance of Tact, the universally lauded, depends chiefly on the omission or avoidance of certain actions, or even more often of words. To say the right thing at the right time to the right person is perfection. To many this *ultima thule* is impossible, yet on the lower and more accessible step of *not saying the wrong thing* we may attain to that real courtesy of which popularity is the acknowledgment. The refinements of this art which come into play amid the more intimate communications of relatives and friends—especially relatives—are very subtle and complex. There are obvious rocks that anyone can see, but there are in many natures raw places that one would never expect and that one can often never explain.

And again :

The art of living successfully with others

depends on the art of omission. By restricting our words and actions, or let us say words, for actions are of comparatively little importance, the chief offences would be avoided.

The first thing needful is to learn to be quiet. It is the foundation for self-command of all kinds. The first step to speaking well is to know how to keep silent. In this way it comes at last to be the *Ego* itself, and not the body or the temperament which conducts our share of the conversation.

The only kind of tact that is worthy of being cultivated by a Christian is that which is based on deep-laid, moral qualities. The reverence that honours all men—the charity that loves them and suffers their faults and failings—the humility that dares not judge them. In the end this would prove more attractive than the most consummate superficial tact, for the unspoken, the undemonstrated part of a character reveals itself to outsiders in some indefinite yet impressive manner. Hence the excellent sense, though apparent lack of logical sequence, in the “I do not like you, Doctor Fell,” and the mysterious attraction for us of people who have not, to our knowledge, said or done anything very attractive.

After all, with men and gods it is the *being* that is the chief thing. Hence the doctrine of

faith rather than works, with the qualification that without works faith is not faith.

I begin to feel that the spiritual life, or what we call so, is governed by inviolable law. That the ebb and flow of feeling, which even the Saints confess, and half regret, is an inevitable part of the highest as of all emotions—and again not merely by Mercy but by Justice the patient cultivation of righteousness must have its reward.

It leaves facts much the same, but I feel more at home in a universe where there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, even if it should be a turning in favour of oneself.

Probably to master the fact I have clumsily and indistinctly indicated and to adjust in accordance with it all our dogmas and worship will be the substance of the next Reformation.

January 23.—The Queen, always the Queen. An exquisite morning, saddened by the knell and the sight of half-mast flags at schools and church when I first leant out.

Contemplating her life one gives thanks for her sterling sense and sanity, both becoming less common in these neurotic days.

I feel sad, and when I am walking alone I seem to feel in the air that all-pervading sound whose sigh goes up from alien races and distant climes.

Was the unimportance of bodily presence ever more manifest? As Mother said the other day, we have hardly seen her and yet we both literally loved her dearly. I thought of the ancient custom of killing so many slaves to follow their master into Hades and reflected how willingly, if it still prevailed (by a painless form of execution, *bien entendu*), I would have joined the ghostly train to do her honour.

To-day was so beautiful, not merely bright and sunny and mild, but so lovely, radiant with exquisite lights and colours, that one felt it was foolish to sigh for summer when winter can work such wonders.

At intervals I refresh myself by reading fragments of — —, and though much entertained, am again struck by the superficial, shallow morality of novel life, even here where the author professes to perceive a deeper religion than that of the ordinary world.

The Queen's magnificent history makes me feel that the perfect life must be more distinctly human than that of the conventional saint could be, and that it is perhaps possible to make the highest out of life by observing the ordinary social conventions—the things that are Cæsar's—rather than contemptuously neglecting or infringing them.

What a pity we cannot preserve the sweet

and supple temper developed by heart-piercing sorrow, or even its approach. If it is separation that looms before us, what are we not ready to accept, to welcome from our dearest. Their very buffets in the shadow of this fear are a happiness. A thousandth part of the devotion they inspire then might carry us smoothly through the frictions of daily life.

The counsels and consolations of Lecky's *Map of Life*, and other writings in the same tone, neither touch nor move me strongly any more. I have moored my soul to a faith at once simpler and deeper. In my philosophy, if it deserves so fine a name, happiness is at once included and transcended. I shall be glad indeed if happiness comes in this world, but it is not the main thing. Happiness of some kind, somewhere and at some time, I shall certainly possess, but it is dispensable and may be forgotten.

The puzzling over life till one's head splits is worse than useless. The very tension reduces our chance by fevering our brains. Better than long-continued brooding is the frame of mind that takes up the problem as a given task, accepting the fact that we may blunder, but placing ourselves in the hands of the Invisible Worker Who can see to that. It is the attitude of the fly on the wheel, who recognises that he is a fly.

She did not spare herself, and the very remarkable self-control she had outwardly attained to at this time, under such trying conditions, was probably determined by the spirited self-examination to which she subjected herself. In reference to the following entry it may be said that Marie Hawker's manners were not only gentle, but permeated by a precise and almost old-world courtesy :

MANNERS.—What makes my own so shaky, especially at home, is a vein of egoism and hardness that, not yet mortified by all discipline, comes suddenly to the surface, and in word, and above all in tone, displays its unloveliness before my surprised self has realised what is taking place. There is impatience that quite unexpectedly springs like a wild cat from the background, and there is a kind of repellent, hedgehog mood that wishes to retire when other people approach and to be silent when they are interrogative. To reach a medium height, one must aim very high. Continually one must hold before oneself the aim of serving everyone by actions, by words, by pleasant tones and bright looks.

Saints and worldlings alike demand from us complete self-control. In the service of both

worlds is it *de rigueur*, yet so far from possessing it, most people, most women especially, are controlled by their temperaments, if not by their bodies. And so far from every well-bred person keeping himself thoroughly in hand, many would repel such an ideal as unnatural and cold-blooded.

A fall is often unaccountable. One is tripped up by unforeseen stumbling blocks in the objective world of circumstance or the subjective world of feeling. One finds oneself not merely failing to fulfil one's resolutions, but rushing wildly in the opposite direction. Then there are teapot storms that sweep one back half way to the tiger before one knows what has happened. It is extremely wearisome, but some temperaments must always be ridden on the curb. So infinitesimally small are the temptations one has to fight sometimes, that even victory is inglorious. One asks, is it morbid, is it absurd to pay so much heed to trifles? Yet the miniature may be an acknowledged form in the art of living, as in all other arts, and certainly the struggle gives a singular interest to the dullest life. And then we all have our halcyon days, when we are in tune with the fundamental note—exquisite moments, the *douceurs* of the mystic writers. Real as the rainbow, the dawn, the sunset, and like these

the consequence and handiwork of immutable laws.

As we sow, we reap. And how strange and wonderful to find that even in this world may begin the harvest of that higher happiness that has its source in something beyond and above this life.

All those subtle forms whereby we contrive to irritate or to alienate others, in nine cases out of ten are due to lack of humility. Nothing is so generally intolerable and unpopular as bumptiousness, and if we are impulsive and communicative and expressive, any of this ungraceful quality within us is apt to make itself felt in tone, if in nothing more definite. One is often much more radically conceited than one imagines. I have a habit of asserting certain things as if my experience was vast and my discrimination of evidence infallible. A question or a suggestion would afford just as good material for discussion, and would provoke much less opposition. One is too apt to determine to take the lowest place and to find afterwards that one has pushed towards the front. One should be for ever striving to improve one's manner, and the ideal of gentleness should be for ever before one. Self-observation may be as undesirable as drugs, and likewise as indispensable under certain conditions.

When in company with irritating persons, it is wise to think of them as little as possible—to divert one's thoughts forcibly. It is indeed when one is musing on their aggravating ways that the fire kindles.

To differ, even from young people, needs to be done carefully, but with old people, as with monarchs, there is to be no differing—either assent or evasion or silence.

In family life contradiction must be avoided, and only in favourable hours (to know them is part of tact) can dissent be ventured upon, and never must this dissent be abrupt or allowed to become impatient. It is politic as well as wise to take on this point the lowest place, even with one's juniors. Indeed how much more likely is one to have one's views accepted if one insinuates rather than asserts them, using the wedge method, and thus avoiding stirring the deep-laid pride which is so strong in human nature that it opposes itself to instruction or anything else that implies inferiority.

When the old do not understand we are apt to explain with an intonation of impatience, whereas the ideal expression should be one of apology for not being more distinct. How little recollection we have of the effect on them of illness or discomfort.

The most powerful of all prayers is Desire. It is the hunger and thirst after righteousness that is filled; not merely the good appetite. But the power to desire anything thoroughly and fervently, to desire it so as to be willing to pay the price for it, is rare as genius.

The following months were to see the greatest trials to her faith and hope, but with the trial came something of the reward of the self-mastery she had gained. The tie between her and her mother was the strongest of her life. They had always loved one another with a passionate affection. Marie's diaries are full of allusions to "the Beloved One," for whose sake she so strongly desires to contribute to the peace and happiness of home. Again and again she expresses her determination to be "perfect" to her mother. "To make my daily intercourse with her the expression of my love—my appreciation—my veneration of this treasure—this jewel accorded me by God."

Mrs. Fennell was one of those large-hearted, sweet-natured, genial women, full of character and vitality, upon whose personality a whole family seems to depend. Her warmth pervaded the whole house. "One felt the atmosphere as

soon as one got inside the door," says one of her grandchildren. "Indeed she generally met one at the door, and Granny Fennell's hug was something to remember." She was the preponderating influence in her family. Her energy carried everyone along with it. She would think nothing of starting off to walk a couple of miles after dinner in the snow to take part in some village or neighbouring festival, or rehearsal of private theatricals, Marie toiling by her side. Her children were absolutely devoted to her and she to them, and the tie between her and the home child was specially close. Since the day when her daughter, at nine years old, could recollect her coming back to her children in her early widowhood, weeping, leaning her head against them, exclaiming, "The Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me," that tie had never been relaxed. She was closely akin to Marie in her sense of humour.¹ One of the daughter's greatest pleasures was to read aloud to her mother, and book after book was got through in this way. The harmony between them was the more striking because it might so easily have been

¹ A note describes how, during a sudden attack of illness, she whispered to her daughter, "I am too ill to speak now, but when I get better I shall describe to you the scene at my inquest."

turned to discord. Though sometimes provoked by him almost past bearing, Mrs. Fennell was extremely loyal to the husband she had chosen, and made a point of keeping up his authority in the house, sometimes to a very inconvenient and, as it seemed to her daughter, an unreasonable extent. If Mrs. Fennell had been less indulgent and had exerted her will more decidedly, Marie could see that things would have gone better, but the only course which made for peace was to give in entirely to her mother's wishes and to be content with her intense affection.

And now this bond, which to the woman of fifty-two had become the pivot of her whole existence, was about to be broken.

Already at the end of 1900 she speaks of her mother not being well, "attacked by one of the sudden chills she has had so often lately." She has heart-sinkings over her ailing condition and then again come surprisingly good days. On January 7 one of these chills came on during the night, more severely than heretofore; the doctor was called in, and for a week Mrs. Fennell was confined to her room. "Mother's improvement fluctuates sadly," Marie writes, when she gets about again. "The remedies are so exhausting.

Her dear face looks so thin, and sometimes walking, her figure seems old at last."

The clouds began to loom thicker and darker, and she questions what would become of her if her mother were taken, without yet being aware of any imminent danger. Mr. Fennell was quite as trying as might have been expected, wearying the patient with constant questions, objections to the doctor's orders, criticisms of everything his wife ate or did—as the daughter remarks, "like a perpetual blister." As her mother flagged more and more, Marie was compelled to face the outlook and, lying awake at night or in the early morning hours, was aware of the ever-thickening darkness drawing closer. Yet she never failed to keep up her spirits in her mother's presence, and reading Dickens aloud, eagerly watching for her faint laugh in the comic parts, she says, "I feel like the fool in *Lear*."

March was a month of ups and downs, but on the 22nd came what poor Marie calls "a curious attack" of great distress, fever, restlessness, and trembling hands, with the like of which she was to become well acquainted. It was the first decided symptom of the bilious fever and jaundice which in a few weeks' time were to prove fatal.

All through April Marie is absorbed in chronicling the changes she notes from day to day. There come restful days when there is no distress, no discomfort. As to whether the attacks will come back or not, they agree that it is better not to think. "I went up to the Park to get vegetables for her. I felt as if Camilla, perhaps in pity, was near me as I paced up the old bordered walks." (Her friend, Lady Camilla Gurdon, had died in 1894.)

April 8 was "a day to be thankful for, not merely of rest but of improvement. Hope has suddenly flickered up again. A short turn and gathered a bunch of violets. The air is full of spring and the flowers are rushing out on every side. Mother better than she has been since January. Bright, clear, quite herself."

Alas! on the very next day the doctor broke to her that there was no hope. The sickness and fever were caused by an internal growth for which at Mrs. Fennell's age no operation was possible.

With the dreaded certainty a wonderful calmness came to her daughter. She read aloud daily, the humour of *The Antiquary* drawing

faint laughter. The Doctor more firmly than ever reiterated his conviction that her mother was sinking; a second opinion confirmed it, and Marie herself was able to note one alarming symptom after another. The tiresome husband was at length sobered, alarmed, apprehensive, and ready to allow a nurse to be installed.

“Sometimes,” writes her daughter, “my pain is almost unbearable . . . still every now and then I remember to give thanks for her long life and for her being spared the pain there might have been.”

From this time, in the peaceful intervals that came between the fever-fits, more very distressing than actually painful, they talked openly of the end. Mrs. Fennell settled that she would be buried at Hurstbourne and would have “no flowers”—in her old humorous way she remarked how beautifully her death had been timed—she had always dreaded it happening in very cold weather: “it would have been so trying and uncomfortable for everyone.” As Marie read aloud *Old Mortality*, she felt that these readings were lights upon the way. She often

became absorbed enough to forget everything but the story and the beloved presence. All questions as to what she should do later were swallowed up in anxiety that her mother might be spared suffering and that deliverance might come. As Mrs. Fennell set apart her ornaments for distribution she talked of her illness, the first sudden failure of strength, the worry and vexations of the household. "But through all," she said, "there have been pleasant and enjoyable times. I have had much suffering, many sorrows, but my life has been delightful and I have enjoyed it. And then I have met with so much kindness. I don't mean from my own people," touching her daughter's hand with an exquisite smile. "That one expects; but from hundreds of people who were no relations, strangers almost"—her eyes filled with tears as she spoke. "I don't know why they have all been so fond of me."

"Mother," said Marie, "do you remember the little girl who was asked why everybody loved her?"

She gave as an example the Wallops having always been so kind and so "remembranceful, all of them," and added, "I remember Rosy¹

¹ Lady Rosamond Christie.

saying, 'If you live to be a hundred you will never be old.'"

She kept her attraction to the last, her picturesque sweetness of appearance, set off by curls of white hair, her humorous outlook on life too, criticising some proposed arrangement on the ground that it would interfere with the funeral.

"This gradual decline is very merciful. I feel as if she were being withdrawn from us by a Hand so manifestly tender, with such exquisite gentleness, that I have not the face to object, and over everything to-night a sense of a Presence so solemn, so sweet. . . . The peculiar background makes room for it; the hush, half-material, the subdued voices and movements, half-immaterial in the strained, listening attitude of the mind that gathers round the dying."

The growing weakness of one so buoyant, so active, so self-reliant, was a heartrending experience and extinguished her daughter's wish to keep her. Together with her sister she watched through the last days, reading dearly loved psalms, sorting out collections, "strange, ghost-like collections, locks of hair, old, old letters,

little drawings I had made as a child for my father."

"Do you remember the lines on Huxley's tomb?" asked her mother two days before her death. "I feel so full of continued life and of meeting again, but if it is not to be, then that too is well." "Someone said to Camilla when she was dying, 'Is there light at the end?' and she said, 'There is light all the way.'"

"Then, mother, you have felt the rod and the staff all the way?"

"Yes, all the way. . . . And you, dear, will be comforted and blessed in the same way when your turn comes. I know it."

Speaking of the happiness of having her two daughters with her, she said, "When you are both there I have all that is most precious to me." And to Marie's remark as to her perfect confidence in the God who had given them to each other, she returned, "There could not anywhere be a stronger bond. You have been my companion ever since you were five years old."

"I begin to feel," writes her daughter, "that the disease and pain that so often attend the close of life are the finishing touches, rapid but masterly, of the invisible artist."

The end came peacefully on the 29th of April

and, kneeling by her, Marie saw steal over her face "a look of peace beyond any that I have known or imagined, so that in a passion of love and awe I clasped my hands, crying, 'Oh how lovely. This is *His* Peace.' " Later, looking on the dead face, she was startled by its charm. "It was that of a woman of twenty-eight or thirty, with an absolutely radiant and triumphant happiness mingled with its ineffable repose."

CHAPTER XV

BEREAVEMENT

THE following letter was written ten days after her mother's death :

HURSTBOURNE PRIORS,
May 8, 1901.

DEAR LADY PORTSMOUTH,¹—At last I find time to answer your kind and most sympathetic letter. I have often looked forward to this hour with terror, but unspeakably sad as it is, I have been sustained quite wonderfully. My dearest Mother's great and increasing distress towards the end reconciled me to anything that brought relief, and then her death was so lovely, or rather she was so lovely as it approached, that it left both my sister and myself with the most vivid and comforting sense that she was passing not into death at all, but into very real life. So much so, it is quite impossible to seriously connect her in our minds with the outworn garment we laid in the grave on Saturday. And I think in consequence we escaped much of "the sting"

¹ Wife of the present Earl.

of pain which the mere burial inflicts on many people.

Please thank Lord Portsmouth for his letter of inquiry which I did not reply to, as Mr. Fennell had practically answered it in writing to Lady Portsmouth. I shall always remember that your house was the one in which my dear Mother last "broke bread" away from her own home.

A few days before her death, when speaking with the tenderest gratitude of all the kindnesses she had received from various people, she specially mentioned *you all* as having been so thoughtfully good to her.

With renewed thanks to Lord Portsmouth and yourself for sympathy, I remain, Yours most sincerely,

MARY E. HAWKER.

Mrs. Fennell was laid to rest in the little churchyard at Hurstbourne. After her death, Marie removed to her sister's house at Homecroft, while Mr. Fennell, by his own wish, went to London for a few months. In June 1901 she writes :

There is some part of this time I should like to retain—a sense of "detachedness" from all things earthly, as if they had at last assumed in

my affection the place that they deserve, as means to an end and of not taking too seriously the drama wherein every man must play his part.

Sorrow like all things else has its rhythm. It dies away, it sinks into a gentle sadness, it is almost unfelt—then suddenly, as with gathered strength, it returns and overcomes us like a flood. I begin to feel that actual belief is something that must pervade the whole consciousness. This makes the enormous difference between belief and that facile and superficial substitute, intellectual assent. . . . And after all, to end, as it is only decently grateful to do, the trial has not been as terrible, as intolerable as I feared. His compassions have indeed not failed: like the rod and the staff they have been with me always.

Chief, next only to Julie's presence and kindness, I count the ministry of Nature—the Beauty of Nature, that from first to last, in altogether exceptional weather, has been beside me—at one time beside *us*—soothing, sustaining, uplifting.

If I were a poet I should write an ode to J.'s lilac tree. A poem in itself, it became by power of association, a suggestion, a poem set to adequate music. It spread out its fragrant, blossoming boughs even to the window of the room that first received me, and, looking

into the lovely maze, I could remember that my Darling in the same room, at the same season, had done the like.

The exquisite cones flowered into perfection of form, colour, and of scent, then slowly faded, repeating the crescendo and decrescendo of all earthly things.

All the time their aspect and odour murmured to me of Mother, and of Mother at her highest and best, as she appeared to us before she passed away.

Still upon me, and all I see and feel, rests that light that never was on sea or land, that irradiated her, that glimmered even on us as she went. The common, almost hackneyed metaphor was literally fulfilled. Through the Gates of Death as they opened to receive her, flashed on us the light of the Heaven into which she passed. O Light! O faint reflection so far surpassing earth's brightest radiance, do not pass away. Rather than lose you I would retain the sorrow.

I have so far profited by my discipline that I can now take things more quietly, and accept even my repeated failures to solve the problem of what to do next.

Went to Haslemere in the hope of receiving light directly or indirectly from George Macdonald. But, alas, I found him struck dumb

for a season, and brain-dimmed by a sunstroke. He was too ill to see me. I sat long in a room that in its paucity of furniture was in the present day distinguished. Such as there was, was ranged against the wall, leaving the rest of the floor uncovered. The effect was strikingly bare and likewise airy, and to my taste reposeful.

After this Marie Hawker made several expeditions to places round London, with the purpose of settling on some work to do; charity organisation, or visiting among the poor; but all fell through, and her health was in fact not equal to such a life.

Returning after the last visit to Blackheath I came home exhausted, and lay on my bed in my lodgings. The day was oppressively hot. Through the window came the roar of London's traffic interspersed with the wail of distant organs. . . . I thought of Hurstbourne with all its "heavy change." . . . 'Tea on the terrace—I always loved that. And on this afternoon it would have been so nice, so sweet, with her beside me on the green seat! Constantly I feel that there are things I must repeat to her:

things that would have delighted her sense of humour. . . .

Shall I go to Winchester, where in the little haven I could live so easily and cheaply? But I shrink from the ghosts of which the little house is full. The memory of one passionate and surely prophetic fit of mother-sickness, after I left Hurstbourne in July last. My soul shrinks at the prospect of having it all revived.

No—no—let me begin my life in fresh scenes, free from old associations.

.
The chaos of my mind is taking shape a little. If I do anything but drift as I am doing perforce at present, I must move towards my own particular vocation, which is brain-work. My pen runs more easily now. If it would begin to write seriously, my being here (London) would be explained and justified.

July 22, Winchester.—Why was my invisible Guide so anxious I should come here? All other places are now crowded and expensive. Here I was certain to find rooms. . . . It is over, the first page of it, and it has not been torture. But it has been sad enough, as I went through the streets and passed the shops she has visited so often. I went to the old walk on the Downs that, evening after evening, I visited last summer. I looked upon

the familiar background to that strange paroxysm of *heimweh* which seized me. Alas ! all this looking back discloses that I was thinking more of my longing for her than of the discomfort that surrounded her, or of the physical oppression I might have guessed accompanied the change of spirits I could not but observe.

If I had not been distinctly but inarticulately warned of what remorse might be afterwards, if I had not been stirred up to make a kind of *culte* of my conduct towards her, how much more terrible might have been my suffering.

I heard in the Downs to-day that strange sound of the summer breeze that I never observe anywhere else, which has in it an ominous undertone of the wind that will visit these grassy heights in winter.

To visit places and find not them, but oneself, changed—that is strange !

It is not merely the loss—that has changed the whole world—but the acute mind, body, and soul strain of the parting—a shock, a wrench—which, after youth is over, one is not likely to recover from. My grief may be from the highest point of view unreasonable, but much that accompanies it, the low estimate of earth's good things, the sense of the supreme insignificance of what we strive after, of the vanity,

light as gossamer, of what we deem so solid—this is rational. Yet futile is this disenchantment, if something Higher and Better fill not the blank. Often I recall Browning's exhortation :

“ Rise with it then—rejoice that man is hurled
From change to change unceasingly,
His soul's wings never furled.”

“ The wheel has come full circle,” and at the last I found again in Her the lovely young woman I as a child first knew and worshipped—so passionately, so romantically, that I can remember lying awake, weeping, in my little bed because I thought she had forgotten to come to give me her good-night kiss.

Some one says, “ Do not increase your grief by idealising your lost one.” But I did not require to do this. The suffering did it. In the furnace of that last week of suffering and distress, the little, the very little that was faulty in her seemed to shrivel up and disappear, and all that was and always had been lovely and adorable to shine forth like jewels recut and polished. There are some beings so near the Kingdom, their entrance is as the work of a few hours, instead of a lifetime. On material so rare, so finely moulded, a few master touches from the Hand of the Invisible Artist produced

the beauty we rightly call Divine. . . . Was not the deepest source of her goodness and her charm, a child-like purity and gentleness, the very essence of the Kingdom of Heaven?

One of the advantages of coming here was to gain a silence in which to try to distinguish that message I seem to hear calling me to do—what?

Père Didon's letters seem to throw light on the outline if not on the details of this undeciphered inspiration. His reminder to carry one's cross not merely with patience but with gaiety has wonderfully invigorated me.

“Laissez agir le Dieu qui veille sur vous ; c'est un grand artiste qui ne fait que des chefs d'œuvre à la seule condition de la laisser agir.”

Meantime the most trivial occupations seem to be my lot. . . . I contrived to do one satisfactory bit of work to-day. I annotated Wordsworth's *Selections* and sent it to Siola.

I should have liked a stirring sermon to-day, but am rendered independent of it by Père Didon's letters. They fascinate and impress me more and more. Why did G. recommend them as psychologically interesting only? Oh, how I envy his power of *recueillement*, of prayer, of soaring!

My powers of reading and writing are returning. . . . If they return now, they return in

time to be rightly used, to Thy glory, O Father, to the good of any of Thy children whom I can reach. Strength, so insisted on in the Psalms, is a duty. For its cultivation an almost ascetic discipline may be necessary. "Stand and wait": the famous quotation must be rightly understood and practised. To stand at attention, as waiting here implies, is very different from lolling and lying down, and means a good deal of effort, alertness, watchfulness.

A study of anything, even of self, may be useful. I have found such confessions as these interesting and helpful, but the study is but a sketch at the best, not the complete portrait, for lack of skill and partly perhaps for lack of vision.

I went to a prayer-meeting of the Plymouth Brethren last night, thinking I should escape theological theories—to me as tawdry as the tarnished images in Roman Catholic churches—and draw nigh to others, seeking like myself after the Divine. It would have been more inspiring if they had kept silence. The women are not allowed to speak. They would probably have been more eloquent than the men, who had certainly not received the gift of tongues. Nothing could have been more discordant with what they wished to express than the tone and manner of their delivery; mumbling, uncertain

. . . on the whole they seemed to be too much "at ease in Zion." The offering of their prayers was one that had cost them too little in the way of preparation and effort.

Attended the recitations of the High School girls. The most striking feature — quantity. Enormous. I came away with many new scenes in mind — suggestions for private theatricals! Of histrionic talent hardly a ray perceptible.

Nothing is more quaint than the purely acquired gesture! Actors and actions uninformed with true life must be, it would seem, grotesque and repulsive.

Began a contemplated study of the Cathedral, by going over it formally with a guide. An improved modern edition of the old Proser . . . a flock of Americans threw into stronger relief this atmosphere of "old, far-off things." The pervading suggestions of instability and fleetingness on one side; faced by an almost awful persistence on the other.

Her stay in Winchester led Marie to make inquiries into the work of the Charity Organisation Society, in which she thought she might engage. She visited the officer and became much absorbed in the cases related in sheafs of letters and notes. She felt how happy and

perhaps wise those seemed who had found a definite place and employment before middle age, and arming herself with books on C.O.S. methods and the Poor Law, she waited, wondering whether a life of service among the poor was that to which she was called:

“I read Mrs. Browning’s account of C.O.S. work last night, and visions floated before me of a life filled with work that might satisfy both mind and soul and enrich the desert of my new life.”

In August she was hurriedly summoned back to Hurstbourne, where Mr. Fennell, while staying at his younger step-daughter’s house, had had a paralytic stroke. Marie devoted herself to nursing him. He was soon able to be moved back into his old home, and when this had to be vacated, he was lodged in Heath’s Cottage, close to Longparish House, while his affairs were arranged.

Mr. Fennell is described as a handsome old man, whose black eyes and florid complexion were softened by his curly white hair, beard, and moustache. He was perfectly complacent and pleased with himself, without the slightest

conception of the trial he had been to his step-children and particularly to Marie. She on her part was willing to forgive and forget all the old difficulties, and all did their best to make him as happy as possible, and to comfort him for his wife's loss, which he no doubt felt very keenly.

“I feel now,” she writes, “that the ‘Shewing’ of Mother’s death would not be complete without the after shewing of Dof’s illness. As I was supporting and feeding him, my struggle was past. As he rested stricken and helpless in my arms, I seemed to feel pulsing through me the waves of a great, a limitless sea of love, ceaselessly and unweariedly flowing, and by its persistent goodness subduing all things to itself.

“Certainly my vague reaching after some service was a true instinct. It has ended my headache as a dose of quinine stops neuralgia. I receive much undeserved pity, for I have been less unhappy this last week than ever since my loss. Often I am folded in such a restful mood that it seems to pass from my spirit to my nerves. When I was sitting eating a picnic lunch on the Beggar’s Stile, I felt as if Mother was blessing me. How

beauty, the natural beauty I love most, has followed and befriended me all this summer. The lovely little garden that the writing-table window overlooks greets me with what is like a smile every time I look up from my writing.

“The more I think of it the more I feel that mercy and goodness have indeed frequented and followed me here. Nothing else would have so smoothed away the soreness, as of a seared skin, which seemed to shrink from everything and everybody in the neighbourhood. And then how easily, gently, and irresistibly have I been *led* to forgive.

“Henceforth I intend neither to be anxious nor to strive. One of my great faults in the past was trying to make people happy against their will.

“*August 22.*—Yesterday I lunched sitting under a tree on the brow over Hurstbourne. I saw the Hurstbourne woods in the early afternoon sunlight. It was the strangest feeling, looking down towards the home of thirty years. Emptiness and silence seemed to inhabit it. It was like a grave. The genius who directs my steps delights in dramatic touches, such as I myself gladly use in story-telling. Suddenly from the valley came a burst of cheerful music; the band going to the Hurstbourne Flower-show!

“To-day I reflected, discouraged, that after all

said and done, he still disliked me, is so often cold in his manner and harsh in his intonation, while so gracious to some others. And that afternoon tears came into his eyes and he pulled my face down to kiss it! It is a wonderful time, 'a retreat' made for me. Solitary mornings and evenings, days of action and almost sacred service, in the little house with humble companions. Glimpses of the ordinary social world seen as through a grating formed by my occupation and my deep mourning. The twilight of the sick or sad seems to harmonise best. No gaiety, save that of Nature's, which is altogether heavenly. And then Nature's is not gaiety; it is gladness."

During the sad winter of 1901 she remained at Hurstbourne with few intervals, looking after Mr. Fennell and his nurse and endeavouring to induce him to decide on future plans and to make arrangements for disposing of his furniture and leaving the house. With a flash of her old fun she gives a description of Mr. Fennell's essays to make his will—of the sheets of foolscap paper lying about covered with formal legal phrases, but unsigned, giving visitors the impression that the step-daughter was trying to

make the aged invalid bequeath his money against his wish. Mr. Fennell was capricious and provoking, and even at this juncture Marie often had an exciting effect upon him which made occasional absence judicious, but he had grown fond of her in his way and dependent on her presence.

The Supreme Will takes the place of one's own inclination. But the exquisite freedom and peace—not always felt, but implicitly believed in, rewards this sacrifice—rushing in as air rushes in to fill a vacuum.

What God does by His disciples, and we do by our will, is to make room for His presence, His light. Yet even this is not always consciously with us, and when it is not, the blank of that swept and garnished room is deathlike. Then indeed we must walk by Faith. But when the Light does flow in, how lovely is its radiance, how wise its reflection, beautifying all the outlook. One feels how much, by suffering and struggle, Love has been able to bestow. I think I understand where the flaw of the Jesuit system lies. It is in carrying into the whole monastic and ascetic system an artificial system, which however useful and under certain circumstances inevitable, remains

artificial and therefore imperfect. Imperfect, that is, as compared with the natural education of Family, Society, Nation. It is a forcing system, and by its more painful efforts does not produce the savour or fragrance, nor perhaps the entire and perfect contour of the fruit that Nature and Grace together working, ripen in their own time and in their own way.

In the spring of 1902 a very severe attack of influenza, which attacked her in London, laid her up for some weeks, but at length, on April 8, she writes to Lady Portsmouth that, with his niece's help, she had accomplished the really Herculean task of getting Mr. Fennell and his "things" out of Hurstbourne.

During the convalescence that followed she writes :

Prayer, in its highest sense, the truly fervent desire for goodness, acts in what we should call an automatic way. It is not that from our point of view God answers the prayer, but that the prayer is answered by infallible law. Just as when heat of a certain degree is applied to certain materials they take fire. No doubt they do so by the design and therefore by the will of God, but that is not the way the fact is recog-

nised by minds still undivested of the vague impression that God's will is like man's will, changeable and changing. So we are haunted by the unavowed suspicion that our prayers may or may not be granted because God may or may not will to grant them. But when we pray sincerely, that is actually desire the highest good, that highest good by the law of the universe—which is the will of God—must be ours—in time.

I felt sadly in the watches of a wakeful night how separated one is from even the best loved. We are like actors in a play whose real countenances are hidden and belied by the masques they wear. It is not the real person, it is his temperament that thrusts aside and hurts his neighbour's soul. I see more and more distinctly that the way to the Divine is through the Human, so it is of supreme importance to be human.

Mr. Fennell was by his own wish moved to a Nursing Home near London. Marie was constantly with him until a few months later he had another stroke and died. She was able to feel that at the last she was a comfort and a help to him, and this was a great consolation to herself.

CHAPTER XVI

MIDDLE AGE

1902-1903

SEVERAL friends, cousins, and nieces have given the impression left on them by Marie Hawker in middle age. After her stepfather's death she returned to normal life, and while keeping on the little refuge at Winchester, was much with her married sister in her home close to Hurstbourne. Though her health continued to be an ever-present trial, time was gradually softening the sense of her mother's loss; the first keenness was past, though she never lost the mystic sense of communion with the Unseen that sorrow and bereavement had deepened into such intensity.

"What was she like when she came into a room?" says one of her closest friends, and answers, "You saw a woman with a plain face, but an attractive face, a slight, undeveloped figure, dressed in an old-maidish way, inap-

preciative of current fashion." That she was badly dressed was often due to the fact that she was employing some failure as dressmaker, to whom no one else would give work. For a whole winter after her home was broken up, she lived in one room, to set up a needy workwoman in a business in which she promptly failed. "I can see she is all wrong," Marie would say plaintively; "she bulges out and goes in, all at the wrong places." But in spite of these disadvantages Marie was extremely dainty and precise in her attire and her arrangements, and her own plain needlework and knitting had the same sort of perfection that marked her writing.

In the winter she used to write after breakfast: her diary, extracts from books she had been reading, notes of any sayings or incidents that had amused her. After luncheon she was ready to talk; "that *was* interesting. She seemed to put interest into the dullest subjects, and to impart information in such a way that she made one *think*."

It was impossible to live with her without being struck by two very strong characteristics. Her deep religious feeling, which seemed to have all the fervour of the Puritan without any

of its narrowness. Life with her was a thing to be enjoyed and made the most of, and any pleasure that helped was to be welcomed as a divine gift. For herself, with her books, the country, and those she loved round her, she was happy. For those who cared for frivolous amusement she was full of loving sympathy, and indeed often helped to procure it for them. Her keen sense of humour was her other distinguishing trait. As a *raconteuse* she was inimitable. She overlooked no slightest touch of humour in a situation, and yet the ridiculous side was brought out in a sympathetic and kindly manner. You could never say she laughed *at* people; she laughed *with* them. The sense of loss touches almost inevitably with sadness our recollection of the one who is gone, but Marie was essentially a joyous person. She would have been the last to subscribe to a gospel of sadness and despair.

During a winter spent with her, her cousin noticed how many letters she received from publishers and editors asking for stories and articles, offering her own terms. Urging her to accept one, the answer, "My dear, I *can't*; I wish I could," first conveyed to her hearer, by look and tone, what a grief it was to her that

her broken health had destroyed the power of creation. It was difficult for the cursory observer to realise this, for she was so full of interest in all that went on, helping with theatricals and seeming to enjoy the gay babble of a household of young people.

A niece who was going to be married, speaks of the sympathy with which her Aunt Marie talked over the new life before her, giving wise advice, full of insight, as to the making of friends and the taking up of charities and other fresh responsibilities. Her observation of the young nephews and nieces by whom she was surrounded was very keen, and she notes all sorts of characteristics of which they were probably not themselves aware, chronicling with great pleasure every sign she observes of dawning talent or goodness of disposition.

Behind all, go on the "thought notes," the remarks and reflections:

There is an instinct that compels some people to cap everything whether as anti-climax or not. R. said something about the coronation, and that one of his schoolfellows was to be a page—"Ah, yes—we too—my wife has a great friend—Maude T. she was before she

married—and she has a friend whose son is going to be a page.”

October 5, 1902.—My favourite month. These beautiful autumn afternoons! Visions of what I used to walk home to through such lights and colours hover tantalisingly before me. The little drawing-room in the gathering twilight, with gleams from the fire dancing on tiled hearth and flickering on china and gilding and in the midst the beloved figure—a longing flashes across me for every detail of that afternoon scene. The very tea-table and burnished tray.

A beautiful day has always been to me a solid good. But now it is more. After one has aged and suffered it becomes a sacrament.

October 30.—Lunched at the Park. The first time since I lunched there with Mother the Christmas before last. Leaving in the afternoon, the burnished beechwoods glowing in the golden autumn sunlight were piercingly beautiful. It was like the past recalled to me by exquisite music.

November 2.—The foliage is rendered tenfold more lovely by wind and weather. The form and substance are more transparent, more spiritualised, the colour as exquisite as ever.

What grief leaves at a certain stage is a kind of aloofness to even the good and innocent things of this life, save to natural beauty and music—real music—which seem to belong less to this life than to the life beyond.

That face of nature in sky and wood, in field and lane and water, which has always said so much to me, speaks now in its richest and sweetest tones. Thirty years ago—nay, later—the aspect and atmosphere of autumn exhilarated me like sparkling wine. I recall with strange wonder the joyousness of that time. Compared with sensations of the present, it is like being borne along by smooth-running wheels, compared to marching with way-worn feet. Yet the tired pilgrim knows she is the happier.

November 4.—I went to my Mecca, Hurstbourne. I knew that on a sky so clear and radiant the woods would be superb. They were. Most of all seen from the field beside the old home. There, leaning against the paling, I remained long in contemplation before that great bank of colour, mystic, wonderful, glimmering through the enchanted haze of an autumn afternoon. My eyes looked straight towards Mother's grave, but saw it not, only the church tower, rising from the trees and dominating all the flaming woods. Felt rather than seen in the foreground,

the little red house, where I had loved and suffered and struggled for so long, supplied one more note to this full chord of symbols.

O Love Divine! Thou art *shown* to us in such beauty as this that I look upon, but in the loving, suffering and faithful toiling of life, Thou art *with* us.

Yet this is the crest of the wave. There are times when I seem to note only the failings of those around me and to see them magnified, when noisy jesting not only palls (which might be excusable), but seems to provoke critical and sour condemnation. And such tempers of mind, though if firmly resisted, they cannot impel, yet repress and retard. Sometimes out of them too flashes up speech and action before one recognises what has happened. One finds oneself expressing an opinion not from conviction, but from an unsuspected root of disapproval and irritation.

I marvel at the undesirable transformation, under the excitement of men's society, in some girls. One becomes loud and affected who is normally gentle and refined. Laughs too loud and too easily—puts on a mincing or would-be fascinating manner—and above all, voice—expresses exaggerated surprise at remarks or information in no way very startling. Is there in all intoxication this disclosure of the animal nature,

the temperament? Is it the same impulse that makes us on impulse speak words or do things we instantly disapprove of? Probably we are constantly committing faults, of commission or omission, which we *do not perceive*, as they are not sufficiently startling to arrest our notice.

We talked of death to-day in the twilight. N. confessed that her eerie shrinking from a dead body has never been overcome by the death of any loved one yet. It takes deep love to cast out this fear. I said probably the only death that would exorcise it would be the death of a child—her own.

J.'s biography has some sympathetic touches. The preponderance of the inner life. The sense of the vanity of popular existence—reached so much earlier than in my experience. Also it awakens regret for the intellectual power I have never possessed, still more for that I have lost. The ability to study or write for hours would free me not only from much weariness, but from much danger. Besides, it is sad in one's own favourite domain to be able to advance so little.

I have been less sad lately and more dull!

November 28.—A lovely winter view at Dobson's Corner. The bright evening of a rainy day. A soft tinge of pink over the eastern clouds and a glow on the Common. Its tints

untarnished, clear, new washed by the day's showers. The green of the grass brilliant and the dull tint of the sedges changing under this magic light to something soft and warm.

December 4.—Going the other day towards Hurstbourne Priors, moved as I have so frequently been by the fancy that I might have been “going home to tea with her,” I was conscious for the first time of a kind of shrinking from this idea, as if incompatible with the released and glorified creature I have been now for so long thinking of. It was incongruous, even in fancy, it was almost cruel to wish to imprison that radiant soul in the aged, frail, ever weakening body which disguised and hampered it in those later years.

December 14.—In the silence and darkness of early winter morning I woke to a weird sense of desolation. I looked into a joyless, meaningless hollow, unspeakably drear. And I thought, Must one pass through this? Instantly, the words, “Though I pass through the valley . . .” came to me, and the thought that it had been so ordered, that the most heartrending memories of my life are by His mercy interwoven with thoughts of Divine comfort and consolation. So, as one whom his mother soothes, I fell asleep.

An invitation to stay at the Park. A kind of physical shrinking from the prospect overpowered my really sincere mental desire to go. *One* day I would have ventured: Before the inevitable *two* I recoiled.

December 22.—Lady Portsmouth by giving me another choice enabled me to go for one night. It was as usual an interesting visit, though I was much encumbered by shy cramp, not by my hosts, but by the crowd of guests . . . and yet all the time, under everything, calm and a sense of the divine reality.

The common formula, "How time flies!" gives me a thrill of pleasure, which I try to repress, remembering that merely to get through one's task is not all. What if one passed through life only into infinite regret?

I speak of dumb notes in some people. But in some, often good and amiable persons, whole octaves are missing.

Her old friends at Hurstbourne Park remark, perhaps with the recollection of this short visit in their minds, that it was very difficult to get hold of her in these latter years. Also that she had always seemed very diffident; not intellectually confident of herself, and that now she was

happier talking to women than to men. She often gave that impression in later life, and the pleasantest talks she took part in were always with a party of women. With three or four congenial friends she could still be the best of good company, but often she became the on-looker, one "who did not seek society for any social purpose"; she gave the effect of an observer, of the kindly, but keen-sighted critic. Her own vitality had become so much lowered that she felt she had little in common with practical aims and the active and vigorous life of practical men. It was not always easy to escape lionising her. People asked continually if the author of the books which had made such an impression were not living near, and said how much they should like to meet her, but when they did so she was very apt to retire into her shell and was not easy to draw out. She alluded sometimes with a touch of ridicule to those acquaintances who always greeted her with, "And what are you writing now?" On the other hand if her companions made no attempt to exploit her, and seemed to take for granted that she could talk on other subjects than her own, she became interested, the barriers fell, and she quickly recognised kindred spirits and made

friends. But her real interests were increasingly bound up in that spiritual world which had become more vivid to her than any other. Nearly a year later, she writes :

Regret can become a passion and enthrall like a passion and like a passion it must be fought and conquered. Occupation is almost the best weapon.

The remembrance of our times of most overwhelming grief, especially in the shadow of death, becomes at last a comfort, because the very depth of the suffering and of the love that was its cause imply a depth and height which far transcend the compass of this little commonplace existence. One feels that this dull round of petty cares and occupations and trivial talk cannot be the sequel to that tragedy in which for a little while we played our part. No, the curtain has fallen for a time, and on either side we and the departed wait the *dénouement*, the drama's inconceivable and perfect climax.

There are seasons when the mind is so tempered by sadness, so tense with the aspiration begotten by sadness, that it reaches a kind of semi-consciousness of the life beyond and of the Beloved who are there. It is a little like our

sub-consciousness of the dear ones who are still on earth and yet invisible and distant. I see only the view from my window with the autumn afternoon deepening over it; I am dimly aware of much wider scenes. And so too one is sometimes aware of the existence of the dear dead. They seem to float like "great Intelligences fair" in some vast firmament, not merely unapproachable, but inconceivable to human sense and fancy, and yet in some way linked to us, like the ether that enfolds the little street where I write and solar systems that are still undiscovered.

This is a feeling different and distinct from that other and rarer one, of their being present with us, visiting us as it were.

October 9.—Strange desolation in autumn evening walks, through the darkness, by windows rosy-red with fires and lights.

We talked to-day of the obvious unhappiness in Heaven of the wicked. It is not only the wilfully wicked who might be unhappy in Heaven. Fleshpots of every kind have their charm, and even amidst the manna may be sorely missed at times by an, as yet, uncivilised spirit.

She never thought of herself as other than a faithful member of the Church of England,

yet some would have considered her unorthodox. She set no limit to thought and she could not acknowledge that sects erected any barriers between souls. Yet she recognised that there were stumbling blocks to perfect sympathy :

One may willingly meet together with Christians of any form or sect, but not without being reminded from time to time with a slight shock that one belongs to the next, the yet unformed Church. One rock is prayer—prayer even for spiritual food. To-day the gentle and kindly minister of the Presbyterian Church spoke of God answering the fervent prayer for souls, by saving them, as if but for those prayers He would not have done so. In fact, was less merciful and loving than ourselves.

The theoretical basis of prayer must be rearranged. Perhaps as mere asking it may have to be renounced. In any case if prayer has any effect, it cannot be upon God.

I *do* pray, *i.e.* ask for spiritual gifts—for guidance especially, but always with the conviction that I am formulating a desire stronger, unutterably stronger in God than in myself, which He rejoices to see me share.

And the prayer for others? It is surely, like all the best prayers, one of the many forms

of "Thy will be done." A union of our feeble desire with His powerful one, an outreaching of love towards the souls we pray for.

This constant *malaise* (neurasthenia or what?) is lifted a little as a mist is lifted, and place, people, and situation are all more attractive. A sudden relaxation of some hidden things in one's wonderful organisation shows one how almost painfully overstrained they had been before. This constantly recurring affection is wearisome, but it is easier to bear than pain. The intellectual stagnation is almost the worst. It is sad to be shut out of one's favourite kingdom.

CHAPTER XVII

SWITZERLAND

ONE of Marie's rare journeys abroad took place early in 1904, when with Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hawker and their children she visited Switzerland. It had been difficult to persuade her to join the party, but the plan succeeded admirably. She was very well, liked the life and enjoyed the music at the Kursaals, was cheered by the merry young nephew and nieces, and full of humorous observations of the tourists. The Germans who colonised in the Kursaal with games and work, the English ladies who conversed loudly through the strains of Bach and Beethoven on the merits of a spirit lamp, the hotel management which in and out of season maintained the absolute perfection of the climate ("Mais il pleuvait hier!" "Oui, mais hier, cela était historique"), the American lady who between German and English amenities described herself as "alternately grilled and frozen," all came in for her keen comments.

Dull people were not the same trial to her as they would have been to a less penetrating nature, but when she speaks of the average Evangelical or Low Church person as being characterised by a certain density of perceptive power, she exclaims, "If they could only learn that besides being, as they are ready enough to acknowledge they are, miserably sinful, they are also miserably dull, they would at once be raised spiritually and perhaps incidentally, intellectually also, to a much higher level."

At Lucerne she writes :

"I say my morning prayers whenever possible kneeling at the open window, so, while I bathe my soul in the Divine, bathing my body in that pure outer air which is the sign and sacrament of the Divine Presence. To-day it seemed as if a beautiful altar-piece had been built in the night by angels to lift up our hearts. The majesty of that incomparable mountain line, the lake that reflected it, the sky, the air, the light! They drew me away from my daily petitions into a burst of thanksgiving. Climbing to Glion on January 30th, a sunny, crisp day, was like a chapter in Revelation. The Grammont mountains seemed to belong to the New Jerusalem. Their beauty marked that

high pitch which pierces as well as delights and passes quickly into longing—that longing the least have felt and the greatest have failed to explain.

How long one sometimes has to wait for answers to certain reiterated exclamations of the soul. But they come at last, when one is not expecting them, and, like all facts, they are not so much explained as all at once perceived.

That beloved past to which memory stretches out such longing tender arms, those days that remain so indescribably more real than this dreamlike present, they are more, they are one with it, part of one great whole, true and coherent thought and manifestation of the Divine, working to an end I know not, but still joyously accept. In God we find all things; even the days that are no more.

The Gorge du Chaudron seen all black and bare as winter has left it is like a canto of Dante's, or one of the Penitential Psalms. There is a point where the rush of the water becomes a roar, and its menacing voice recalls the terror of an agony that draws near. As I passed through the gorge I seemed to see represented, in one superb symphony of stone and water, all the suffering that so many, many had experienced. The long ice poniards pierced my very heart's core by reminding me of the frozen

tears that gather round unutterable sorrow. We must all, sooner or later, pass through the Gorge du Chaudron if we would reach our Father's Home. His greatest Son could not escape.

When after long toiling through its stern walls, to the sad singing of its waters, the pilgrim looks up for consolation, on sunlit peaks far above he sees the snow and knows at last what whiteness means.

The humblest and most primitive facts in life are most congenial to the music of the spheres. In crudest dissonance sounds the course of conventional social life, the babble of society, its routine, its amusements, its aims. Not so the simple elements of human life: the sowing and reaping, the building, the cooking, the sweeping and cleaning.

The commonest gifts are the best. Bread, water, air. Of all the influences of beauty, is any one more precious than the blue of the sky? I remember how once travelling in wild anxiety I looked out of the carriage window and suddenly, from the deep unfathomable blue above, derived a sense of consolation and peace that astonished while it soothed me.

It was hoped that the Hawkers' stay abroad would be a prolonged one and that Marie would

accompany them every year and so avoid the long lonely winters. It seemed an excellent solution of many difficulties, but it was not to be. Mrs. H. Hawker's health gave way unexpectedly. They were obliged to return to England, and though still constantly with her relations, Marie was impelled from time to time to withdraw to her Winchester rooms. The love of being alone, a marked characteristic of her family, grew upon her, and though she was still hoping to take up some definite work, as the days passed on and her health more decidedly declined, she was much thrown in upon herself and had to face the fact that there was little hope of her playing any active part in life. Resignation and stillness were henceforth to be the part assigned to an impulsive, eager nature which she had often herself accused of being too anxious to make others happy in its own way. The ideal she places before herself is impressive because of the testimony borne by all with whom she had to do, of her patience, her sweetness, and her loving interest in others. Her conversation was still delightful. Her cousin, Mr. Henry Houndle, of whom her journal speaks as being "so linked up with the old life," recalls with pleasure the great interest of her political talk.

Keen as she had always been on the Liberal side, she was able to discuss contemporary politics, not only without heat, but with a wide survey, a pithy good sense that, if it did not convert her interlocutor, at least raised questions and suggested many points to think over :

Perfect serenity is the mark of the soul that rests perfectly in God, without discontent, without chafing. As He shapes the day so it is to be received. Hour by hour, each little imposed or assumed duty or pleasure, each as they come, are to be quietly performed and peacefully enjoyed or suffered.

Annoyance when I desire repose, change when I am disposed for rest, dullness when I crave amusement, failure and incapacity when I long for success and victory.

It demands *courage*. If you have it not by nature, it must be acquired. Deference is beautiful, but not a craven fear of others. A due regard for their feelings makes us careful, but not morbidly or timorously careful. Ridicule or displeasure must sometimes be faced, you must resist to the death that hypnotic strain if you have it in you, that inclines you to yield to persuasion, wise or unwise, that makes it difficult for you to say no, or to do the opposite of

what is expected of you. It is no true love of your brother. The resignation of one's own will is only admirable in him who has the strength to retain both. The lowliness and self-effacement inspired by weakness is entirely distinct from true humility, of which it is often the caricature.

Beware of the distraction of pain or ill-health in any form. The thing itself may be grappled with, removed, but the, for a time, inevitable distress must, if serenity is to be maintained, be taken up and carried cheerfully as a cross. Otherwise, fretting over it, you forget your resolutions, and serenity and self-possession fall from you like an ill-fastened cloak. Oh! help me to acquire complete possession of 'Thyself, especially when distracted by the confused brain and harassed nerves of ill-health, and in spite of it to go forth "smiling firmly," to do *what* I can, as *well* as I can.

What the saints call recollection is so difficult to maintain. It is a temper rather than a thought. The mind must be employed about its work if the thing on hand is to be done with all one's might, but it may be done intently and yet in a serene attitude, instead, as it too often is, in an anxious, flustered, or *too eager* mood. The interruption, which was no interruption, the short pause for aspiration,

helped to make the work all prayer in the old monastic rule.

What an overwhelming sense of my imperfections comes over me, that at my age, with my few faint temptations, I should find a difficulty in overcoming them, and with this an overwhelming sense of the temptations of youth and a great determination to be very merciful to the young.

No distraction is less agreeable and more powerful than that of bodily *malaise*, and against this, just because I am particularly subject to it, I do well to arm myself. It stifles as well as distracts. One's thoughts are not merely directed from the main object; they seem as incapable of grasping it as if they had been drugged.

This is more than distraction : it is depression. What can one do ? Only so far follow Christian Science—if one cannot absolutely deny that one is ill, at least ignore it as far as possible. The sense of sadness, of home-sickness for the past, of loneliness in the present, waiting to meet one when one first opens one's eyes, sometimes clinging to one all day, let me take it up like any other cross. Let me also forget it as much as possible, in striving to do what there is to do as perfectly as possible.

Was it St. Catherine who made a little

oratory in her heart whereto she might retire when she wished? I would like to build one about me. An aura, a sanctuary of Rest, founded on entire submission, where without agitation, without irritation, without *fear*, I might suffer what I have to suffer and do what I have to do still on the earth, and yet in my Father's Court.

How exquisite is the sun in which I sit steeped. So pure as well as so warm, so life-giving. It might be my mother folding me in her arms.

It was a great pleasure to her to put up a window to her mother's memory in the little Hurstbourne Church. It is the only stained glass there: a narrow slip in the chancel, and in keeping with Marie's sense of her mother's hopeful, thankful nature, the idea and spirit of the golden angel, holding a scroll inscribed "Praise the Lord, O my soul!" is one of joyfulness and light.

CHAPTER XVIII

LAST NOTES

DURING the last few years of her life, Marie's health declined rapidly, so that though she was not till the last a complete invalid or confined to bed, no work could be undertaken, and she passed much time at her lodgings in Winchester or at Richmond. At both she had kind landladies who knew her well; at Winchester a Swedish *masseuse* was much attached to her and her services had become very necessary. The failure of the digestive organs made it difficult for her to take ordinary nourishment. She was too much inclined to give up food entirely, and it was no wonder the doctors pronounced her brain to be "starved." "My brain feels wooden," she would say. In the last year of her life appeared *Old Hampshire Vignettes*, a little book of studies of the more typical inhabitants of the village she knew so well. It was slight, yet, as a friend said, "bringing with it the sound and the scent of the water meadows

and the vision of the beloved country and its people as nothing else could do." Her grip on her characters is very tight, and not only those who knew and loved the scenes she described, realised the actors in them as living men and women. But even this slight effort was too much for her ebbing strength. The only way in which she could utilise the thoughts with which her brain was still teeming was in the "thought notes" of her diaries. Her high-minded sincerity shines through every page of these, and she went on with them however ill and depressed, sometimes for her own benefit, but also with the hope, more than once expressed, that her experience might prove of use to others and that so she might be able to speak to them. Her power to realise the difficulties of the spiritual life and her frankness in transcribing what she knows must appeal to the sympathy of many who will feel the touch of a kindred experience, and her mind is of the calibre that not only confronts difficulties but suggests remedies :

Men could hardly preach anything better to such an age than restfulness and calm, for now most of us have come to a pitch when we can



THE WATER MEADOWS

hardly hear each other, far less God. Yet it is not so much that one is deafened by the rush of the world as by one's own temperament.

First comes not so much submission as joyful assent to God's will, to the part He has appointed for me in the great scheme that works to the "divine far-off event." The rest is courage, the cultivation of Fearlessness, the firm resistance to the vain tendency that shrinks from ridicule and disapproval and is swayed and affected by admiration.

Last, and far, far the most important of all, having cleaned and silenced the room, is Love, love of the brethren, by scrupulously excluding the faintest shade of uncharitable feeling, of irritation or resentment or harsh judgment; of excluding them by stirring up kindly feelings, by attentively considering the good side, the kind actions of everyone I am tempted to blame, and by praying fervently for them, still more by serving them if it can only be by manner.

The half hour with which my inward dressing for the day begins includes an attempt to get myself into the right frame of perfect serenity, without agitation, without fear, resting on God, loving all men.

When the thought of what I missed in the past in the way of patience and forgiveness rushes over me, the sense of keen regret is

healed and soothed by the thought of the ineffable goodness and grace by which I was enabled in the end to forgive, to forget, to love and serve my old enemy—an end as beautiful in my memory as one of Bach's fugues. I hope that all which seems egotistical in this is not merely selfish. I wish it might prove of use to others, forlorn and shipwrecked like myself.

I walked to Chilcomb on a brilliant autumn morning for service. As it happened there was none, but, having procured the keys, I sat alone in the exquisite little church. The autumn aspect, the autumn scents had struck a note, sweet and sad, and the interior of the church, whose early Roman arches and windows show its great age, struck another in the thought of the many generations who had worshipped there. The golden sunlight lay "in pools" upon the brick pavement, and the hum of a bee resounded in the stillness. That silence, as intense silence so often does, seemed to suggest a noiseless presence. It was so easy to fancy I was surrounded by worshippers, perhaps Mother amongst them, and as if from them to me flowed the deep sense of peace. I did feel, without regret, without desire, that all was, is, and shall be well.

I read through a great deal of the service myself, while the bee, in complete harmony

with the invisible choir, sounded his little monotone.

Combined with a stronger sense of devotion comes a great sense of peace—a feeling as if I had suddenly fallen into step with the march of the Universal advance, and as if all things work together for good because I am at last working, or trying to work with all things, instead of striving against them.

September 1904.—I shall be glad for more than one reason when the *Hampshire Vignettes* are finished. I feel like Grimaldi, and only hope the reader may be as merry as the writer has been sorrowful. After being steeped in the sunny atmosphere of the old Hurstbourne Priors life that surrounds each subject, my actual life shows solitary and sad. Whilst I am writing it is pleasant enough—too pleasant—it is the awakening as I lay down my pen that is the trial.

I notice how commonly, how constantly Camilla's figure stands out from the others. The one most individually concerned of all, except mine own people.

When one has strength enough to talk coherently and clearly, one seems hardly to have strength to control the talk, not to talk a shade unwisely. I always go back and repeat my old rule—to speak only what is needful.

To try to speak deliberately. What is needful includes, of course, words and remarks demanded by courtesy, to set people at their ease, to amuse them, to help them to talk well. And for all this as a rule, so little will suffice. To learn to control one's conversation as one learns to control one's breath in breathing lessons should be one's aim. But then speech must not be omitted from indolence or lack of interest in others.

I had a glimpse to-day of what the Presence of God is: an actual, a physical neighbourhood, not the least the shadowy, ghost-like existence of our common conception.

I have always the feeling of getting more into step with the great Cosmic march—as if everything was shaped for me in what I should call a miraculous way—if I believed in the miraculous. No more than in the miraculous do I believe in any divine favouritism. The Divinity that shapes my ends shapes also the ends of every living soul.

Shall I ever be able to eat and live like other people? *Yes*, instantly that for them or for me it is best that I should so live with them.

My writing is very poor and faint—often it is cold. I find the effort tiring. One side of me longs to see the hour-hand release me. But I am not discouraged by those feelings as long as

I do not yield to them. The saints have long ago taught me the value of *dry* devotion and I follow the counsel of one, "*Quand Dieu vous ennuie, dites-Lui qu'il vous ennuie.*" Often the mere confession rouses in me a sense of the Divine Tenderness vivid enough to make my indifference seem absolutely preposterous. It is not *really* the Divine that wearies me, but the straining to reach that Divine through impenetrable veils. Yet no perseverance is more surely rewarded. One reaps often where one needs it most and expects it least. In moments of apathy, of dullness or of danger, one is roused and cheered by gracious and loving impulses and by a keen realisation of that sublime kingdom—the *Real*.

I am rather uneasy as to the lack of work in my present life. I began wondering whether I should go and offer myself for work at the C.O.S., but a strong impulse seems to advise me not to do this, or to make any other engagement of the kind till I am at least well enough to dispense with medical treatment. Yet, distrusting this idea, I determined to go next day, and was then brought up short by an attack of lumbago and neuralgia!

A few days later, in answer to the same questionings and heart-searchings, at the close of my "waiting time" I felt exhorted to practise,

even in my desire to serve God, more repose and more trust. Crumbs of service have all last year been vouchsafed to me and, till I am ready for more, will still be vouchsafed, if I wait and watch and rest on the Unseen.

A visit was paid in the autumn of 1906 to Hurstbourne, where, leaning over the churchyard gate, she looks towards her mother's grave and then enumerates the old familiar features of the landscape :

Highest of all in the distance, the Beech Avenue. It is evening, a fine winter evening that makes a poem—a picture. Veil after veil most cunningly drawn over all, through which the copses become soft masses of feathery brown, every tone of brown from that of a withered beech-leaf to the hue of a leafless elm branch against a pale sky. And purple, dark indigo purple, the distance painted in cloudy blue. The colour of the meadows is sad green; the streams catch the light and shine like long narrow spears among them. Behind this low-lying picture is a great suspended sweep of sky, all suffused with rosy pink.

The mystery, the sadness, the sweetness of it, expressed by colours all subdued except in the sky beyond, is wonderful, only to be attained

by winter and eventide together working. The symbol perhaps of that old age in which all fierce desires and passions have burnt themselves out, and only the glow of faith remains.

I am installed in my new room.¹ The sense of sick revulsion with which I thought of it, lonely, meaningless, for me only, has subsided. The other side is that the greater space, comfort, and brightness is a gift acquired by no choice of my own, and for which I have more reason to be thankful. I have in mind Mme. Swetchine's saying: "Moins nous nous en sommes mêlées, plus les circonstances rendent du bien."

I feel more than ever how "contrary" I am. Apropos of the imprecatory Psalms, of which now, when the clerical world begins to condemn them, I begin to perceive the better side! The prayers and desires for work have been met by weeks of great incompetency of mind and body, an experience that seems plainly to say, *wait*, before undertaking anything on which others may depend.

I have worked through another attack of influenza. With me, unlike more happily constituted persons, illness affects the mind as much as the body. It is then that I am able

¹ At Winchester, where her sister-in-law had arranged a new and pleasanter lodging for her.

to distinguish the difference between devotion and religion, for the one drops off and the other—thank Heaven—remains. Never am I more conscious of the Divine Presence, if only with a dry matter-of-fact consciousness. I realise that God is coming to me in the suffering more truly than in devotional moments—only afterwards do I feel how close was the Presence, how sleepless the watch, and under all my emotionless perception of Him remains a kind of dogged loyalty and unswerving conviction that His ways are perfect and beautiful. And why, indeed, if I trust Him in spite of the suffering of the world, should I doubt Him because of my own petty share?

In the early spring of 1907 she decided to go to Richmond, where she could get the treatment that suited her. She was ill, and the change of air and effort of moving brought on languor and nausea which made life very difficult. She could not at first get comfortable rooms and regretted her bright, fragrant lodgings in Winchester. The longing for a settled home, which at her age it seemed hard she should not have, could not be repressed, and she dreaded the thought of being seriously ill among comparative strangers:¹

¹ She was in no way hampered by want of means, and at her death left upwards of £10,000.

So grumbled on the lower man. Fortunately it counts for less and less. Its moody voice was drowned by fervent professions of faith and courage and love. I knew that it was well with me, that the Divine was with me all the time and under all was peace.

I was moved to send for Caussade's *Abandon*, and his teaching, the formulation, as it were, of my own life's teaching, of my slowly developed religion, cheered and braced me every day.

How excellent is this shaking and shifting for a temperament disposed to depend far too much on circumstances and conditions, to sink into them and be cramped by them and discomposed when they are removed. It is a form of slavery and I am always calling for freedom.

As Deaconess Esther's "odd woman," I do all sorts of odd jobs in the parish.

April 11, 1907.—I am preparing to go back to Winchester. I do so giving earnest thanks for this winter, so calm, so cheerful. Yet I forgot to notice in what distress and weakness the *Vignettes* was finished. What with pain and exhaustion I felt in too unreliable a state to trust myself with the proof-correcting, so I paid —— to do it. He did it very badly, leaving unamended a misspelling of Leech (as Leach) which shocked even the publishers.

Meanwhile I take everything more easily. I accept without much disquiet the failure of all my intentions with regard to work. I have learned to see that my nerves, or something in me on which good work depends, are too unstable to allow me to assume any permanent post. One week excellent, the next not bad, the third, brain and physique shaky. The memory drops stitches, the wrist hardens as if into wood, and will hardly allow me to write.

I came back to Winchester the end of April, and pacing the little kitchen garden one day I had one of those experiences common enough probably to more deserving souls. There where the green vegetable rows were struggling upwards and the bees were humming eagerly at their task, I seemed to descry suddenly the Divine Person present and working in all and through all this germinating and reviving life, and better still to feel His unutterable tenderness and love, and to perceive in all the weary, uneven, disappointing way, of which I felt the strain, this love and tenderness were working surely to a beneficent and beautiful end as well as in all this springtide resurrection round me. The afterglow sweetened many things.

After this I had a summons to take J.'s girls to Cambridge for the May week. An uncongenial one when I felt more than commonly

ailing and unfit for outings and strange houses. Fortunately I had the grace not to refuse the service I am ever asking for.

October 1907.—I have been glancing over and numbering my journals and “thought notes.” I waver between the impression that I have taken a new lease of life and, I trust, of work, and that I am breaking up. I wonder whether I am fundamentally better or not—whether I am going to live or die.

Yet I feel more than ever the dread of *assuming* any work, because so utter is my lack of confidence in the outer self of my physique. I am such a poor creature that I seem to be overpowered by physical conditions, but (D.G.) I am able to keep calm and look the experience steadily in the face.”

By January 1908 she chronicles “a wonderful improvement in spirits and energy.” With her health completely undermined, and neuralgia and chronic indigestion kept at bay for the moment, she is still sanguine and hopeful of recovery, with something of the old joyousness that was the side she showed to the world :

“It would seem I shall not die but live. If it be so, I trust more than ever that it may be

to serve others, especially younger and less experienced others in this rough world, in such ways as shall be made plain to me day by day, by that Kindly Light on whose direction more and more implicitly I depend."

But she was not to live. As the year advanced consumption came on rapidly. Realising how troublesome her cough was becoming, she put off going to her sister's house till well on into the summer, thinking that Herefordshire would be too cold. When at length she arrived, to her sister's surprise and grief she found herself greeting a dying woman, and a few weeks of utter collapse saw the end. Her last illness was marked by the same tender and courteous consideration for others that had distinguished her life. When the food ordered brought on deadly nausea, she would rouse herself, as it appeared, to say, "Here comes my kind nurse, always bringing me something good," and all those who helped to nurse her speak of the unfailing patience with which she bore the misery of "a very, very distressing cough" and all the little trials of great weakness. She died on June 15, 1908, aged sixty years and six months, but it was difficult not to believe her much

younger; not only was she alert and bright, but her mind and her outlook upon life were so far removed from those of age. She died at Broxwood Court, and lies in the little churchyard of Lyonshall in Herefordshire.

.

Marie Hawker maintained great reserve concerning her notes and meditations. Their existence was almost unknown to those nearest to her, and, notwithstanding her careful arrangement, she left no instructions of any use to be made of them. It was not till some years after her death that, in response to what must have seemed almost a chance request, they were brought to light.

She has left us the chronicle of a life which failed in many of its aspirations and efforts. Only here and there a stray word, written half involuntarily, alludes to the loss of that power of doing creative work which had been plucked away while she was tasting its first charm. Once, as her mind and pen dwell on the joys of Heaven, she adds a pathetic sentence, "And then I shall not be sorrowful any more because I cannot write." Her own wish had been to be useful, active, a factor in the lives of others, the bearer of a message to them. She

was obliged to forgo her ambition, to give up doing work, either social or intellectual, to resign herself to a perpetual struggle with bodily discomfort, with despondency, impatience, want of faith: all the evils that chronic ill-health induces.

She has indeed, in spite of all failure, achieved the success of placing in our literature a tiny modicum of work which promises to be of permanent value. That is not given to many, and those numerous and prolific writers whose excellent stories are showered upon us, to give place to others as excellent—and as ephemeral—may envy the circumscribed triumph of the little books that after so many years continue to go into fresh editions and appear on the way to become classics.

But this channel of communication with her kind was soon closed. It was only as a looker-on, a sympathiser, that she could in life serve her nearest and dearest, yet now that she is dead it seems that she may once more reach a wider circle, and that the words in which she has recorded the battle and the victory, wrung by her soul from apparent defeat, may still have their message for the souls of others.

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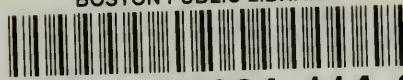
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